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CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

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BY

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New York

E. P. DUTTON AND CO.

PUBLISHERS AND IMPORTERS

31, WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

MDCCCLXXXVIII

HB 72
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500444

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to enforce the principle that economic conduct is matter of duty, and therefore part of the province of conscience and of morals. It might seem, accordingly, as if the book would have been more appropriately called "Economic Morals." I have preferred the title, "Christian Economics," because the purpose of the book is practical, and because the Christian motive and the Christian spirit are not only the true but the most commonly recognized expression of moral principles.

A great part of the book consists of sermons actually preached. That part of it which consists of essays or sermons unpreached has still something of the character of the sermon. I have no wish to assume the dogmatic tone to which the preacher is supposed to be always entitled. In dealing with

argumentative subjects, it has always seemed to me that the preacher's prerogative of not being answered is a disadvantage. The sermon does not allow of an exhaustive treatment of all objections. Difficulties of which the preacher may be conscious, and the answers to which would enforce his point, have to be omitted. As it is, since he cannot challenge and deal with objections, it remains for him to aim at suggesting principles for the acceptance of conscience. In the present case, therefore, while the sermon form has enabled me to claim the subject of which I treated for the authority of conscience, to which all the associations of a sermon appeal, it has left my own particular opinions or method of treatment to stand for what they are worth as suggestions.

I have not aimed at a systematic or exhaustive treatment of a subject, on which I wish rather to provoke discussion or reflection. I have made no attempt to define a doctrinal or ecclesiastical position, though it may appear, from casual allusions, what are the doctrines and the system of life which I conceive to underlie and condition the true view of social and economic ethics. Still less have I attempted to define

any exact philosophical basis for the views I have expressed. There are two branches even of the subject of Economic Morals which I have left almost untouched. A separate book might be written on the service done to morals by modern economic life, as *e.g.* in the development of credit. Separate treatment is, perhaps, needed to prove in detail the reality of the moral factor in economics, as *e.g.* in modifying the standard of comfort.

Nor, again, have I here attempted to show how the Christian treatment of Economic Morals is a part of the larger subject of the social character of Christianity and of the social substance of the Gospel teaching. It is not that in the economic or other branches of Christian morals there is any new truth to be taught in this direction; but there are those new applications of old truth to be made which make truth ever new, and which are a part of the intellectual duty of faith in every age. It is in the showing forth of social truths, and in the working out of their practice, that the work of the Church in this age seems to lie, the work in doing which she may recover the reality represented by her national name and posi-

tion. And in this direction Churchmen may apply afresh the principle which the Church represents, that Christianity is a social creed, by identifying her with its social character.

Economic Morals touch religion on one side; they touch politics on another side. Economics were a political subject once, because there was a cry for the removal of political restraint. They seem likely to become a political subject once more, through the demand for legislative action to secure economic results.

The point on which I wish here to dwell is, that the moral consideration of economics is prior to any conclusion on the political question. As a matter of fact, the principle maintained in this book, that economics are within the sphere of conscience, might be made a ground of argument either for forwarding or for resisting the modern tendency towards State interference in economic life. The object I should wish to secure would be that it should become the ground of argument on both sides. If economic life is to be vindicated from the interference of law, it must be because it is claimed as the sphere of conscience,

as a matter with which conscience is competent to deal, and does deal. If, on the other hand, economics are once more to become political, it is all-important that legislative action should be guided by moral principles, not merely excited by palpably unsatisfactory results. The moral basis is in either case essential.

It seems presumptuous to make, and yet ungrateful to omit, an acknowledgment of a debt to Mr. Ruskin which is in no way peculiar to myself, or limited to this particular subject. No one could approach the subject of Economic Morals without being indebted to his teaching. I have not conformed to his conclusions; I feel bound to say, nevertheless, not how much I owe to him, for that would be impossible, but, at least, that I am conscious of a debt which I can repay only with the acknowledgment that it is due.

On economics, in the ordinary sense, I have found Mr. Marshall's "Economics of Industry" most useful to myself personally, as well as for purposes of teaching. I wish also to acknowledge my debt to Mr. Walker on "The Wages Question," to Mr. Cunningham on

"Politics and Economics," and, as will again be obvious, to the late Mr. Toynbee in his "Lectures on the Industrial Revolution."

Of the contents of this work, the lecture on "Conscience and Political Economy," which stands first, was delivered in the south transept of St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, on a week-day afternoon. The three following sermons were delivered as a course on Christian Economics, at St. Mary's, Glasgow. The sermons numbered VIII., IX., XI., XIV., and XV. were delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral, and in various churches in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee. The rest of the book is made up of essays approximating more or less to the form of sermons. The order of treatment is roughly as follows—

I. The relation of Economic Morals to Political Economy, as ordinarily understood.

II., III., IV. The principles of the three great economic processes of Production, Exchange, and Distribution.

V., VI., VII. Principles concerning the three main factors in economic life—Labour, Management, and Resources.

VIII., IX., X. The end, the organ, and the method of economic life.

XI., XII., XIII. The three aspects in which commodities present themselves to the individual—as possessed, as exchanged, as enjoyed.

XIV., XV., XVI. Three points immediately concerning practice—the dominant principle, the immediate practicability, and the ideal of economic duty.

Where there are allusions to the particular place and time of the delivery of the words, I have left them as they stand; partly in order to mark that occasional character of the treatment of a great part of the subject, on which I have already insisted.

There is one other point on which I wish to lay stress in conclusion. I am prepared to be told that the view of Economic Morals which I put forward is an impracticable ideal. If I answer that this is because Christian Economics are a part of Christian Morals, I do not wish to be understood to claim any authoritatively Christian character for my own apprehension of moral principles in application to

Economic conduct. I only wish my readers to bear in mind that Christian Morals must always speak what will seem to be the language of paradox, and command the accomplishment of that which "with men is impossible."

TRINITY COLLEGE, GLENALMOND,
November, 1887.

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I.

CONSCIENCE AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Contrast of mediæval and modern economic life: absence of legal restraint in the latter,

If a man who lived in mediæval times were to be brought back into our world of to-day, few things would surprise him more than the freedom of commerce and industry from the regulation of law. And yet, probably, it *would* surprise him more to be told that commerce and industry were the subject of a science.

It is not easy to picture the vast and radical change whose evidence would confront him at every turn. Into our world, where prices and the quality of goods sold and bought, wages and the migration of workmen from place to place and from trade to trade, interest in money lent for purposes of trade, the nations from which we import, the markets to which we export, are all matters left to be settled between

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buyer and seller, employer and labourer, merchant and merchant, man and man, he would emerge with the memory of a world in which no one dreamt of regarding any of these as other than a proper subject for the restraints of local regulation or national law. Local guilds aimed at securing good work and skilled labour, and enforced laws of apprenticeship. Wages were fixed by authoritative custom. When great social or economic causes, such as the spread of a money system of exchange, the decay of villeinage, depopulation by plague or war, the substitution of pasture for agriculture, produced a change of conditions, and weakened the efficiency of local restraint, Statutes of Labourers and of Apprentices were passed to check migration, and to enforce by law the rules which had always obtained under a national sanction. Prices, again, were matter of definite regulation, and an assize of bread would fix the price of the loaf, and the proportion in which its size might vary with a good or a bad harvest. Law distinguished between the loan of money such as made a man a partner in the business which he aided by his funds, and the loan to mere necessity, interest on which fell under the definition of usury. Law allowed or encouraged trade with foreign nations, or towns, or commercial leagues, and fixed "staples"—places to which export

was restricted—in order to concentrate and strengthen foreign commerce.[1]

Before he asked what were the principles which governed our commercial and industrial life, our mediæval visitor would stand amazed, on the first view, at the disappearance bodily of this system of restraint — the only means with which he was familiar by which any principles, political, moral, or commercial, could have force; and a question would occur to his mind, as to what were the causes that had produced such a vast and universal change. We should tell him that the change had been a long and gradual process, and that many agencies had been at work; but if, through all these agencies, we were to name a single force whose operation gave unity to the history of the growth of free commerce and free industry, we should say that the main and constant agent was self-interest. The separate nations, whose antagonism fills the history of the period after the Reformation, had used the traditional power of law over commerce and industry to promote their own political interest; and, meanwhile, commercial and industrial life had been growing too strong for the bonds of the old system, and, at the end of the last century and the beginning of

[1] Cf. the earlier chapters of Cunningham's "Politics and Economics."

this, the gathered force of the individual interest of traders and labourers had burst them and cast them aside once for all.

We should naturally pass on to justify the change as a great gain to commerce and the community. We should point out that, broadly speaking, experience had justified the view, not only that the general comfort and convenience of life was increased by the freedom of commerce and industry from restraints imposed by political considerations, but that, in so far as legal restraint had aimed at commercial prosperity, governments were not as good judges of what tended to this end as the individual traders and labourers, left to work out their own aims by any means and in any combinations which their own choice and their own interest defined. We should point with some pride to the vast and world-wide system which the forces of individual interest have built up—the fabric of a commercial life, in which every individual, in every part of the world, plays his part in contributing to the comfort and prosperity of all the rest.

But while we were drawing a more than complacent picture of our present commercial life, there would appear, I think, in the face of our mediæval friend an expression of puzzled interrogation; and

as soon as we allowed him a pause in the flow of our eloquent laudation, he would be almost sure to ask, "What in your modern system has become of the purpose and spirit that underlay all our legal restraints? Where does *right* come in? Our laws and regulations, from which you are so glad to have escaped, were intended to secure commercial prosperity, but they were also intended to secure justice and right. Very likely"—we will give him credit for humility—"they failed to attain their purpose. But our way of looking at the matter was, that man had to live by the Divine law which spoke in the enlightened conscience and through the lips of human law. And king, and Church, and all our authorities, and all their restraints gained respect, and were allowed, for commercial purposes, to regulate the rights of men, on the ground that they were the agents of the law of God in the governance of human life. They were supposed and intended to fix fair prices and just wages—in fact, to enforce what was right. You say it was a mistake to enforce it. Granted. But you do, no doubt, believe in the governance of human life by the Divine law, only I don't exactly see where it comes in in your system."

At this point it becomes a little difficult to say

how we should continue the discussion. There are two authorities, either of which might be put forward as the substitute for human law, as the mouthpiece of the Divine Will and the exponent of the Divine Mind. We might say, "Well, the fact is, we have learnt to look at the whole mass of commercial and industrial life as the subject of a science, and we consider that the laws of Political Economy are the expression of God's Will in this region, just as the laws of astronomy, in so far as we know them, or the laws of meteorology, if we could discover them, are the expression of the Divine Will within the range of those sciences." Meanwhile, we should probably add, "Conscience is, to our mind, a far more effective agent of the Divine Will and Mind than any legislative enactment, and conscience, of course, is operative in the region of which we are now speaking." In the perplexity of an endeavour to reconcile these two apparently discordant answers, we must, I think, leave our inquiring ancestor. There is no doubt which of these two authorities would be most to his mind, and we shall turn to best account any light which his criticism may throw on our modern commercial life, if we ask, What has conscience, the authority *de jure*—the authority which he would

which is subject to the authority of Political Economy and conscience.

What has conscience, the moral authority, to say of Political Economy, the scientific authority?

prefer—to say to the rule exercised by the authority *de facto*, the authority usually accepted — Political Economy ?

I have called conscience the authority *de jure*. Let me first—not justify, for it is above justification—but emphasize and define this authority. It is above justification ; it is not beyond analysis. We may trace the history of the conscience of to-day; we may tabulate its dicta; we may examine the nature and sanction of its command ; we may hear through its lips the ring of a Diviner voice. But its authority is absolute and complete. It cannot be described in any terms which are not tinged with some theory of its nature or of its purpose; but the authority itself is a fact, one of those facts which theories and philosophies only exist to describe and to explain. In the nature of man there is, in the history and development of man there has grown up, this authoritative principle—call it by what name you will—which says to every man, and in every man, as to all that he does or leaves undone, You ought, or, You ought not. For these commands conscience neither offers nor needs any authority but its own. That is its claim : a claim which carries it in its own sheer right to the defiance of any consequence, of any actual power, to death itself, and

Conscience is the authority "of right."

dignifies resistance, even where, in the individual, conscience is unenlightened and misled, with the inalienable character of martyrdom itself. It needs enlightenment; but enlightenment is the guidance, not the source, of its authority. Its authority is in itself. It does not calculate consequences with a view to any end but its own, and that end is "good," of which it claims to be, in every single human life, the authoritative judge. It is the power to see and say what is good with authority.

And to this authority there are no limits but such as conscience itself imposes on itself. Throughout the whole range of the life of man, wherever there is anything for a man to do or to leave undone, conscience is supreme. Conscience in one man holds intercourse with conscience in another. It is a social faculty. Conscience and conscience blend in collective utterance. In this social and collective life, it acknowledges a spiritual dependence and claims spiritual kinship. In this it is open to enlightenment in its own kind and on its own ground. But its authority remains ultimate and unimpaired. It may say in any man, You ought to do what others tell you, and what others think you ought; but even here the "ought" is its own. In this spiritual and social life it grows and develops; it

unlearns moral mistakes and rises to higher moral levels. But its own vision and authority sanction its condemnation and warrant its advance. It depends on reason and experience for enlightenment on matters of fact or speculative truth; but neither fact nor theory can usurp its unique prerogative of command. Science and philosophy enlarge and lay open a wider field for the exercise of an authority which they can never reinforce, and can certainly never circumscribe. To one authority only in its own kind does it bow. Rather, by its own act and effort, it passes up into, and fuses itself with the imperious dictate of love.

It is before the bar of this authority that we have to summon whatever claims to direct a man what he is to do in any part of his life. And so, in view of the fact that Political Economy does, in some sense or other, claim to govern men's actions in one particular region—namely, in the efforts by which we produce wealth, in the actions by which we exchange it, and in the joint operation of these two in bringing about its distribution—I ask, what has conscience to say of Political Economy? We have to appeal—for reasons on which I shall have something to say—in the conscience of the ordinary man, to a conscience not very highly

And it has to say of Political Economy, that it is not satisfied with its results or with its principles,

enlightened in its own kind, and very often not enlightened at all as to matters of fact. But to the conscience of the ordinary man Political Economy has to commend itself, if it is to govern his actions. Does it commend itself to the conscience of the ordinary man? If not, even the inarticulate murmurs and uninstructed protests of conscience must be either construed into explicit fallacies, or else obeyed, unless we would tamper with the effectual power of conscience itself. And the conscience of the ordinary man, I think, broadly has to say, if it could speak, that if, and in so far as, Political Economy governs the life of men in this region, conscience is not satisfied with the results; and further, that it does not acquiesce in the principles to which these results are ascribed. They do not speak the language of conscience; they have nothing to do with "you ought;" they are not really intelligible to conscience at all.

A few instances will bring out the antagonism of which I speak.

Take, first, the most obvious instance—the beggar. May I in this case give an example from my own experience? Glenalmond lies, it might be thought, far away from the difficulties and problems of modern social life. And yet I remember, when I first went to Glenalmond, being surprised to

e.g. (1) beggars; (2) buying cheap; (3) investments.

find that, for beggars, Glenalmond lay on the road from almost anywhere to almost anywhere else. The reason I soon found to be that the College had a tolerably wide-open back door, which made it quite well worth the while of a tramp to come a good many miles out of his way. Well, of late years the back door has been—not altogether closed—but it is a good deal less wide-open than it used to be, and, consequently, if the beggar came now, he generally found his way to the Warden's house. I need not describe how I myself dealt with the practical difficulty in individual cases. But the result, I may say, was, that though the beggar did not receive any undue encouragement, he still came. About a year ago I found out that five miles further on, on the roundabout road from Perth to Crieff which is the beggar's route, lay a farmhouse where the farmer had long made it a settled practice to give to any beggar who came a shake-down in a barn for one night, and a simple supper and breakfast. Comparing the Glenalmond back door, now closed all but a narrow chink, with the farmer's barn, I must confess that my own conscience did not feel altogether at ease. And the contrast is, I think, an example of what many people feel on this question, whatever they may do. They feel drawn different ways.

Take another instance. Supposing that I leave the

wilds of Glenalmond, and come up for a day's shopping in Edinburgh, or pay a visit to London. With a pardonable desire to make the most of my resources, I make for the cheapest shops. But if I do so, what has conscience to say? Suppose I am buying furniture. I do not know what happens in Edinburgh, but I know of a part of London where men live who are employed by one of the great dealers in furniture, where, under pressure, men are employed to work twenty-four hours on end; and I suppose every one knows that overwork and underpay are regular incidents in the production of cheap wares.

Take another instance. In a city like this there are a very large number of people who live on the interest of money invested. Invested in what? In what pays the best interest and gives the best security. But what are we paid for? For helping to do what? Do we ever ask? Do we think it to be our duty to care? Political Economy does not say that it is. Does conscience acquiesce? I think not.

In these and other instances, which might, I think, be multiplied, conscience surely has to say that it is not satisfied with the results of what professes to be the ruling system. It is driven, then, to challenge the existing system on principle, and to ask, "What are its laws?" And the

These results are referred to the "laws" of Political Economy.

answer is, "All these things are subject to the laws of Political Economy."

Here, at the first mention of the word "law," we must make a distinction. "Law" is an ambiguous word. We must distinguish between laws of obligation and laws of fact, between laws of conscience and laws of reason and observation. The former state what, under certain conditions, always ought to be done; the latter, what, under certain conditions, will always occur. The former, the laws of obligation, issue from conscience, and can claim its authority. The word "law" is applied in this sense to legislative enactments. These are the expression of the conscience of the community. They are in the main limited to the authoritative expression of principles which can, and, in the judgment of the community, had better be enforced by punishment. In a weaker sense the name is applied to those declarations of principle as to the duties of nations and communities one to another, in whose support the general sense of the world and the agreement of nations sanction the use of force. It is applied, again, to those very numerous laws which are enforced by the sanctions of public opinion, by the loss of public praise, and the visitation of public blame. And, more widely still, it is applied to recognized moral principles

Distinction between laws of obligation and laws of fact.

which have no other sanction than the condemnation of conscience itself. But all of these agree in two points. They have their source in conscience, and they speak the language of obligation. They say, This you ought, or ought not to do.

Laws of fact are quite different from these. They issue from the theoretical faculties, from reason and observation; they state what is, not what ought to be. The law that two straight lines cannot enclose a space is a theoretical law. It may become indirectly concerned in a moral problem. If, being at one end of Princes Street, you ought to get to the other as quickly as possible, then you ought not to walk round the Castle. But the obligation arises not from the rational law that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, or from the observation that Princes Street is a straight line, but from the duty which calls you to the other end of it, whatever it may be. And the obligation to this duty has its origin in conscience.

The laws of Political Economy belong to the theoretical class.

To which of these classes do the laws of Political Economy belong? The question is not quite beyond dispute. The authorities are very much in favour of the view that the laws of Political Economy are laws of fact, not laws of obligation. Let us in any case be clear at once that this is the only claim which, on the part of conscience, we

can allow. Political Economy is, on the face of it, a theoretical science dealing with human actions. It assumes certain principles as to how men will act under given conditions. Observation, or anticipated observation, supplies the conditions, and the science reasons out the actual or expected results. The conclusions take the shape, Given such and such conditions, this is what men will, as a matter of fact, do. Take, for instance, the theory as to the increase of population with the means of subsistence associated with the name of Malthus. The theory was that, given the then present moral nature of men, population would keep pace with the means of subsistence at a low standard of comfort. The theory was not scientific at all, except on the assumption that men will multiply as fast as the means of subsistence will allow them. The conclusions drawn from this were, that rise of wages will not better the condition of the working classes, and that commercial prosperity tends only to the indefinite multiplication of a more or less miserable and degraded population. This is a theoretical conclusion; it states a more or less probable rule of fact. And this is the character that properly and strictly belongs to all the conclusions of Economical Science. Wherever, then, we are reproached with desiring to

break economic laws, the words used are themselves absurd. If they are laws, we cannot break them; we can counteract them or defy them, and be justified in doing so or not, according to the probability of success or failure, and the moral value of the motive which induces us to make the attempt.

Practical or moral laws of economics there are none.

But if the laws of Political Economy are not laws of obligation in the field of economic action where are these laws of obligation to be found? Surely they ought to exist. Surely, there ought to be a substantive body of moral principles dealing with economic duty. As a matter of fact, I believe it is broadly true to say they do not exist. In the history of morals, practice generally comes first, and theory follows in its train. There are moral problems enough in the region of economic practice, in the matter of daily duties, and the common economic relations of man to man. But they are unsolved in theory and practice alike. The theoretical science holds the field, and principles of duty as to our economic relations exist, neither embodied in a substantial and systematic shape, nor yet afloat in the common consciousness and practice of men.

And this is not a very unnatural result. The theoretical science holds the field. And since it is a science which, though theoretical, deals with matters

of practice, it is inevitably converted into a practical science. If I were suddenly to introduce, as an illustration in this lecture, reasoning which would prove — merely theoretically — that, supposing those principles to have been observed in the construction of the roof over our heads, which, as a matter of fact, are known to have been observed, the roof would inevitably fall in in a quarter of an hour, the obligation under which I stand to deliver a lecture might keep me where I am; but I should be very much surprised if any assurances I were to give, that my reasoning was purely theoretical, availed to preserve for me an audience to listen to the rest of the argument I wished to illustrate. You cannot make statements as to the probable results of a given course of action without practically affecting the question whether men shall take that course of action or not. If some law of obligation were present to your consciousness or mine, conscience might prevail, and we might stop where we are. In a crowded theatre, for instance, a brave man would face the real danger of fire to himself, rather than increase the greater danger to the audience of a hurried rush to the doors. But if the moral obligation is not there to counteract the statement of probable fact, the indicative is very soon

The theoretical science supplants the moral theory.

changed into the imperative mood, and "I shall probably be killed" is transformed into "I had better run away."

And in economic matters the moral obligation is not present. In the last hundred years there has been a vast increase of commercial and industrial life. The field of action has enlarged beyond all imagination. The conditions with which we have to deal are intricate and complicated to the last degree. Science, which tells you what will probably happen, has kept pace with the change. Moral theory, which tells you what you ought to do, has not.

Does not the science, then, afford materials for moral theory?

But if science is so readily translated into practice, is not the distinction imaginary? Conscience is always at hand to translate science into morals. Is not the end attained? This argument we must, I am afraid, consider at some length. There is no formulated claim of Political Economy, as it stands, to be the indirect source of moral principles; but what actually takes place is that the generalizations of the science are made to do duty for moral principles, and the general impression is that the moral end is attained. Is the end attained? It is attained if the science is such as to answer the purposes of conscience; but this is not so, for three reasons.

In the first place, Political Economy proper is a strictly abstract science. Action is never abstract. Political Economy reasons out the probable or certain conclusions of certain hypotheses, or supposed laws of human action. It supposes the uniform action of a certain dominant motive. This motive, or any motive, may be dominant, but no motive is universal. It is modified in action, and it may be modified still more, by other motives, which, for instance, it may be the business of conscience to bring into play. In any case, a science which professedly assumes the universality and uniformity of a motive, which is neither universal nor uniform, is not a science whose conclusions are fit to be translated straight into practice. It may or may not be broadly true that population increases in proportion to the means of subsistence; but it does not necessarily follow in any particular instance, that if you give a certain man, or body of men, increased means of subsistence, the only result will be a multiplication of paupers. This is a *theoretical* weakness arising from the nature of the science itself, from that very abstract character which gives force and cogency to its theoretical conclusions.

No; (1) because science is abstract, and assumes a universality of motive that does not exist;

But we must look, in the second place, at the nature of the principles assumed. What is the general

character of the principles assumed? What are the motives under which, for the purposes of the science, it is assumed that men will generally act? Political Economy creates an imaginary world. The economic man rarely exists in full perfection, in fact. But, apart from this, what is the character of the economic man? He is a man who is invariably guided by what he sees to be his interest. Such a man may be a very useful member of society. He may be guided by the light of self-interest, of the most or of the least enlightened kind, to live the life which will make him contribute most to the good of his fellows. But the conclusions of a science which assumes as universal, action governed by such a motive, cannot, by any alchemy of conscience, be transmuted into moral principles which ought to be obeyed. Conscience knows, in any set of circumstances, two motives—the right and the wrong; it knows no indifferent or intermediate class. Political Economy does not assume immoral action as the rule; it is indifferent. In the eye of the science, all action is non-moral; right and wrong has nothing to do with it; it assumes action whose motive is an enlightened view of expediency. From a science whose language is, "Men who pursue their own interest will act in such and such a way," we can draw no conclusions of the

(2) because the motive assumed is at best non-moral;

form, "Therefore I ought to act in this way, or in that." In the second place, then, the theoretical conclusions of Political Economy are not fit to be translated at once into moral principles, because the motive under which Political Economy assumes that men habitually act is at best a non-moral motive. Conscience, in fact, would unhesitatingly condemn the life of a man who was uniformly guided by however enlightened a view of his own interest.

(3) because the principles of economic science are generalized from a commercial life in which high moral principle is not dominant.

But there is a third consideration affecting the fitness of the conclusions of Political Economy to be translated into moral principles. Political Economy rests on assumptions as to the motives uniformly governing the actions of men, not in all the world and all ages, but in a certain form of commercial and industrial society, existing at the present time among nations of a given degree of advancement in civilization. It assumes, for instance, the readiness of men to transfer their capital or their labour from one employment to another at the bidding of their interest; it assumes a general power of seeing what their interest is. How far these assumptions are universally true of the region within which they are supposed to hold, if Political Economy is to have any immediate practical bearing at all, we need not

ask. It is enough to see that the whole science, as it stands, is an analysis, not of the commercial and industrial life of man, but of the commercial and industrial of our own time and civilization. Its assumptions, therefore, as to the motives on which men habitually act, will reflect the actual character of the motives under which men have acted and do act, in the course of the growth and expansion of our modern commercial system. And it is, unfortunately, the historical fact that the birth of this system was in days when religious and moral principles were barely strong enough in the world to animate the existing fabric of society, far less to keep pace with and inform this new and rapid growth. And while there has been a very notable development of religious and moral vitality since the days when enthusiasm was a term of reproach, it will, I think, scarcely be denied that the religious and moral growth, and the commercial and industrial growth, while they have coincided in time and place, have not interpenetrated one another or flowed into a single stream. Broadly, I suppose it will be allowed that a weakness of our religious movements has been that they are not in touch with the conditions and difficulties of modern society, and that while, as I shall have occasion to observe, the commercial and industrial fabric is, in

its main structure, a moral organization, it is not pervaded in the mass by any high spirit of religious devotion or stern morality. So that, in the actual character of the source from which the assumptions of economic science as to the dominant motives of men are drawn and derived, there is fresh reason why we should not consider its conclusions available for moral guidance. They are generalizations as to the motives current in a society not pervaded, we have good reason to believe, by a tone which will harmonize with the voice of that moral faculty which is required to adopt them as its own.

Historical Political Economy is no better suited than scientific economics to be the source of moral principles,

But, in making this last criticism, we have already taken some steps along the road which leads to a Political Economy professedly proceeding on a different method. It has been allowed, and indeed maintained of late years, by a school of Political Economists, that a science whose principles are drawn from the limited field of our present economic life can never justly claim any universal or cogent force for its laws. Its place should be taken, it is said, by an Economic Science which is historical in method, which traces the growth of economic life, and compares the economic practices and principles of one age with those of another. And such a historical

Political Economy, it is further said, will not aim at any such isolation of the purely economic motive, of the motive of self-interest, as can never lead to results corresponding with the facts, but will view the economic life of this or any other age in its true and actual relation to the rest of the political and social life of man, of which it always forms a part, and with which it is inextricably intertwined. With the merits of the controversy between the two schools of abstract and historical Political Economy, we are not in our present argument concerned. The only question we have to ask is whether historical Political Economy is any better fitted than the more abstract science to furnish conscience with conclusions which may be readily translated from a theoretical into a practical form, and may take their place as moral principles or commands. And the answer to this question is, that historical Political Economy will answer this purpose under exactly the same conditions as any other branch of historical science, under the same conditions as history itself. History teems with moral lessons of the widest and the deepest kind; history may serve the highest moral purpose, if it is written and read as the history of the establishment of moral principles, and of the achievement of moral ends. Historical inquiry, though it appears to

begin at the beginning, always, in fact, begins at the end. It is the history of this or that institution, or of its fall. It asks and answers the question—What has produced the given result? What forces have built up the institution? What causes have brought about its decay? It begins with *this* end of the clue, and traces its way back to what, in the writing and the reading of the story, appears as the beginning. Historical Political Economy is a systematic view of the history—of what? We come back to our old distinction. Is it a history of the development of the principles of right in commercial and industrial life, or is it a history only of the progressively successful means by which men and nations have sought wealth, and have achieved the wealth which they sought? If it is only the latter, it will not serve the purpose of conscience; it will not tell us what we ought to do; it will only tell us how to do what we want, provided that what we want is to pursue our own interest, as men have generally, and with progressive wisdom, more wisely and cunningly pursued it. If, I say, it is the latter—if it is a history of the development of enlightened self-interest, it will not answer our purpose. Can it be the former? Can it be a history of the progressive or of the fluc-

since it gives the history of the development, not of the principles by which economic life ought to be guided, but of the principles by which it is guided.

tuating growth of moral principles in economic life, unless it starts with a firm hold on this end of the clue, with a clear view of what our duties are, of what we ought to do in commercial and industrial concerns? Surely not.

We want, then, a Political Economy which shall be a branch of morals and define duties, and we have not got it.

We are left, then, with the conclusion that there is a want which no Economic Science satisfies, although it is a want which, as we have seen, the very existence and richness of Economic Science tends to conceal. We want a Political Economy as a branch of morals—a systematic view of economic duties, of how men ought to behave to one another in the complex relations of modern commercial and industrial life. In the society to which I ventured to direct attention at the beginning of this lecture, the Church exercised an authority not only so powerful, but so pervading that religious and moral influences were always in contact with every part of life, and were able, as a matter of right—however successfully or unsuccessfully in fact—to guide and control a commercial and industrial life immeasurably less complex than ours. The loss of this official influence of morality and religion has been felt, and has been supplied in very different degrees in different fields of social life. The individual conscience which overthrew authoritative religion,

also overthrew authoritative morality, except in so far as law still controlled, as it had always been its function to control, obvious and flagrant breaches of moral law, as being fatal to the national life. But the individual conscience has not in all cases alike filled the place of that which it overthrew. To take merely a single instance of moral duties that lie in the main outside the range of law: I do not suppose any one would say that the current code as to the life of the family, as to the relations between husband and wife, and between parent and child, is all that we could wish. But none could well deny that in this region conscience acts as a constant moral force, supporting recognized moral principles, advancing acknowledged moral ends, to an incomparably greater degree than in the relations between buyer and seller, or between employer and employed.

This is the want, then, on which I insist. Economics, as a branch of morals, does not exist. We cannot do what we ought, unless we know what we ought to do. And we don't know what we ought to do. It is not Political Economy, but conscience, that is to blame—conscience, and those whose duty it is to serve its guidance and enlightenment. Many excellent people have an easy and conclusive theory that a man's conscience will always tell him what

his duty is if he will listen to it. No doubt this is perfectly true, if it is allowed, among other qualifications, that conscience sometimes tells him that he does not know what he ought to do, and that his duty is not to rest till he finds out. A double appeal, to say the least of it, is wanted, to those who, by profession or capacity, are qualified and commissioned to deal with the theory of duty, and to the mass of us, who, after all, have got to do our duty, and for whom moral teachers and moral theorists can do very little, unless we are at work on our own account and in our own sphere to find out what our duty is, and to do it. As it is, I maintain that our ignorance stares us in the face. To go back to one of the instances to which I have already alluded—buying cheap. We know the evils of cheap production. How are we to avoid contributing to them? Buying dear is an easy, but in many ways an unsatisfactory way out of the difficulty, and it is not much, if at all, a more moral proceeding than buying cheap. How are we to know what is the right price at which to buy, so as not to support oppression and feed on misery? We don't know; and we don't know because to do so is not a generally recognized end. The moral view of so ordinary a transaction does not exist. If I want to buy a particular article or com-

modity, it is not difficult for me to ascertain where to buy it cheapest, or best, or dearest; but it is more than difficult for me to find out where I can buy it and pay the right price for it. Our mediæval friend, whom these wearisome arguments have lulled to sleep, may well wake up here to say, "Ah, we had an authority to fix that. He may not have always fixed it rightly; but there he was." Well, we have an authority—conscience; as we believe, a better authority in these things than external authority; but our authority does not speak. This is merely one instance. In a dozen other instances, it is easy to see that on subjects on which conscience ought to have a voice it has nothing to say. I plead for the extension of the efforts and of the actual authority of conscience over the field of economics. That this field belongs to conscience by a right which no science can dispute, I have endeavoured to show. That this claim of conscience is not realized, in fact, seems to me to need no further proof than an attempt to arrive at a clear idea of almost any given economic duty. It remains only to show that the field is congenial to the authority to which it of right belongs; and this may be shown on the evidence of the science whose right to furnish moral or practical principles

Conscience has overthrown the authoritative morality of law, and has not supplied its place by the systematic assertion of its own authority.

I have denied, but whose practical value and interest I should wish distinctly to maintain.

And yet commercial life is a field congenial to conscience—a field in which vast moral forces are at work,

As to the field offered to moral theory by commercial and industrial life, there is indeed much to be said. I have heard it seriously maintained that a merchant's life is one which no high-minded man could choose as a field for moral energy, with the hope of carrying out a lofty moral purpose. Such a view may be extreme, but in a milder form it is very widely spread. Many, if not most people, regard mercantile business as a life whose end is to make money. And this business is supposed to be pursued, under moral restraints, indeed, which forbid clear and obvious dishonesty, but in obedience to no high or inspiring moral principle. The presence of any higher inspiration we commonly expect to be shown, not so much in the way money is made, as in the way it is spent. There is a story of a man with one wooden leg, who stole a pair of boots and gave away the odd boot in charity. The devotion to charity of the superfluity of wealth unscrupulously gained is not commonly supposed to condone any dishonesty in the means by which it is acquired, but there is a good deal of one-legged morality in the common practice, and still more in the common theory of commercial life. If I have seemed

to cry down the moral dignity of economic science, I am by no means disposed to acquiesce in this low view of the moral character of commercial life in itself. I cannot understand how any one can devote any study to this subject, or even survey the obvious facts of the system in which we live, without being impressed beyond all words with the magnificence and scope of the moral forces that are at work in our commercial and industrial life. I have spoken of the defects of our moral theory in economics. Defective moral theory must arise from and tend to produce defective moral practice. But as the taint of sin in human nature does not avail to hide the glory of the image in which we are made, so no defects of moral theory, however great they may be, can avail to conceal or to destroy the moral strength that remains in this gigantic system. The giant is a blind giant if you will, but he has the majestic frame and mighty thews of a moral giant none the less. The vast fabric and frame of the economic life of the world is alive with moral forces, is strong with a moral strength, so far as it is strong at all, and when all is said it is strong indeed. I have spoken of the motive of self-interest as, to say the least of it, morally insufficient. But, after all, self-preservation is a duty, though a comparatively low one, of the individual. And when mutual self-

preservation is the result of the common life of the members of a society, and the attainment of this result is any part of their motive, we are in the presence of a great moral power doing a great moral work, in the removal, by however slow degrees, of those conditions of want and misery which are bred by sin, and breed it. It still remains to be said that this view of the dignity of economic life, and of any place in the system which makes for these results, is not the prevailing view; it remains to be said that it should be brought into clear consciousness, and become no mere undercurrent of feeling, but a dominant faith. But the first step towards this is to see the real moral value of the work done, and of the motive which, so far as it operates, is a real agent in the doing of it. But we may go far beyond this. Commercial and industrial life, as they stand, do, as a matter of fact, however it may come, proceed upon moral principles of the highest value, exemplify them on a vast and colossal scale, and bring about by their means the most amazing results.

e.g., credit.

For instance, credit is a term of business and of economics which stands, we know, for a whole world of facts—facts which, if we look at them, surpass almost every other wonder of the world. It is familiar to us that for food and clothes and

furniture, and all the ordinary equipment of life, we are each one of us dependent on a world-wide and intricate system of combined and divided labour. We know that this vast machinery of production makes its various produce available in all parts of the world through a no less vast and intricate system of exchange. But what is the means by which this exchange is effected, and by which what we need and enjoy is brought to our doors? Money? Money, coined money, stands to the real means of commercial exchange in somewhat the proportion in which copper coins stand to the rest of the currency. The real means of exchange of the larger commerce, on which all the smaller commerce of everyday life depends, are various instruments of credit. Without the operation of credit the whole system would go to pieces like a world without gravitation. And credit, if we translate the word from the language of commerce and economics into the language of morals—credit means trust, and trust implies trustworthiness. In our dependence on this vast system of production and exchange, we are members of a great moral world of human trust and human trustworthiness. Every now and then trust fails or is abused. There have been two instances in Scotland, in the last twenty years, of disasters produced by the abuse of trust, in commercial

and industrial concerns respectively; and the indignation they excited is a sign of the moral power which lies, not dormant, but not in the full consciousness or exercise of its strength, in the body of our life.

Commercial and industrial life, then, is a moral fabric. Conscience will enter into it and find itself at home, with plenty to do, no doubt, to set its house in order, but in no strange, repulsive scene; among people who speak its own language, though it may be with an unfamiliar accent: it will be organizing the government of a province, whose natives have instincts and habits that correspond to the definite laws and institutions it will seek to establish. This is the work of conscience and of moral theory and enlightenment in every part of human life. Deep down in the human heart itself lie the instincts that grow to be the principles of life. They are part of the lines of the original foundation. They are hidden in the structure of the seed that is to grow into a mighty tree. They cannot be imposed from without unless they can be evoked from within. Economic life is a human thing, made by men who had in them the instincts of fellowship and help, and who, even where they disregarded, could not wholly contradict the laws which are essential to the cohesion of any society, and under

which alone a truly human soul can live its life and be content.

The field of economic life, then, is intensely and truly congenial to the authority that should rule it. And, if this is so, plainly the science which has busied itself in this field must itself be fitted to serve, in some way, the purpose of this authority; it must take its place, though it may be a subordinate place, in the moral government of the economic world.

And, accordingly, it must be allowed that Political Economy, as it stands—the science which works in this field—serves a real, though a subordinate moral purpose—

Political Economy, as presenting the actual spectacle of this great field of human life, cannot fail to be a study of fascinating and surpassing interest. But, beyond this, it serves a twofold moral purpose. I have tried to show that it cannot claim to be a science of the moral ends that should rule and guide commercial and industrial life. Observation and the analysis of fact are not the source of moral principles. But though it must not be allowed to usurp the place of a science of economic ends or principles, it must fill an important place as the science of economic means. Let a man be equipped as well as he may with true economic principles, with true conceptions of the main end of economic life as a whole, and of the great factors and

(1) as the science of the means to moral ends;

agents in its work, he must still know, and know intimately, the actual world in which these principles are to be applied, before he can apply them. He has to act upon men, and among men and with men; he must know the average economic man with whom he has to deal. His principles have to find their way along roads that are already trodden by thousands and thousands of busy and laborious men. He must know the map of the country. He must go down among the crowd who do the work, whether they do it well or ill; he must watch them at their work; he must know their minds, their methods, their habits, their pursuits. And for all this he must go to the science which deals with economic life as it is. Conscience, as the teacher of moral principles in this as in any other department of life, cannot live apart and declaim upon the heights. We must see the unguided instincts at their work; we must discern in their actual working their true motive and principle; we must be familiar with life. Ends and means are two different things, but they are different in idea rather than distinct in fact. If men are to be led to seek real wealth, we must see what is the wealth they do seek. If they are to produce it by methods that are in accord with the true end to be pursued, we must know what the methods are by

which it is produced. In that process of moral reasoning which produces action, the minor premise is often more than half the battle; and we cannot get the minor premise which will bring principle into play in the world of fact, without using all the resources of that economic science, which sets out before us economic life as it is, and as it has been, in the world of present reality and fact. In the first place, then, Political Economy—the Political Economy we know of old—serves the purpose of economic morals as giving the means to its end.

(2) as affording a spectacle of the moral government of the world—

But it serves another and a more impressive, though not a more essential, purpose. The laws of Political Economy have sometimes had assigned to them the rank which we momentarily gave to them in our comparison of modern and mediæval economic life. They are sometimes spoken of as laws of the Divine Governance of the world. With the falsehood of this contention we have already dealt. Plainly, the laws by which God governs economic life are the laws by which He governs the whole life of man—the laws of right and wrong. And in this government, conscience is His vicar, and the human will His agent. If we disregard the obligation to bring our economic conduct under the sway of these laws, to learn them and obey them, it

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is at best an unconsciously hypocritical delusion to plead that, in pursuing his own interest and leaving the consequences to take care of themselves, man is leaving the results to God. We are leaving them to God in the same sense in which a mother, who stifles the instincts of love and abandons her child, is leaving her child to God. We are neglecting our duty, and leaving God to deal with and remedy the evil consequences of our neglect. True, God has given us the instinct of self-preservation which leads a man to pursue his own interest; but He has also given us the instinct to identify this self which we preserve with the selves of others, and with the universal Self of God. And in the development of our nature, this latter instinct has assumed, in what we call conscience, the authority over the other. The first truth about God's moral government of human life is, that His laws are meant to come into operation through the agency of human wills. But when we have said this, it still remains to be said, that while God governs men first of all by themselves, He governs them also in spite of themselves. And it would be most ungrateful not to acknowledge the moral service rendered to the world by Political Economy, in exhibiting this side of the moral government of God. It sets before us what, as a

matter of fact, occurs, and what actually occurs has a moral bearing. There is no field of observation and knowledge which is not a source of Divine revelation. Political Economy is a doctrine of judgment on sloth, on luxury, on waste, on shortsighted selfishness, on crass stupidity, on rash and inconsiderate pride. And, more than this, it exhibits the steady pressure of reward and punishment, by which men are won from lower to higher ways of life; of the guidance—it seems scarcely reverent to say the overruling guidance—under which the blind instincts of the tribes of men grope their way out of the darkness of mistrust and mutual war into the clear light of mutual faith and loyal fellowship. It shows us a spectacle of human life which is also a spectacle of Divine design—design not forced upon an unwilling, but evoked from an unconscious world, where mutual need grows into mutual help; and the fellowship of men is knit by no external bonds, but by the ties of that knowledge and good will which emerge in the community of help, into one world-wide ministry to life and love.

And yet the picture has dark patches, not only here and there. The more we see that the soul and guiding spirit of the whole is good, the more resonant is the cry that rises from the great discordant scene

for the harmonizing rule of some triumphant power. It appeals to something deeper than conscience, this world of opportunities for love. A strange power of change seems to be inherent in the landscape of life. It is dark and light by turns. At one moment it is the appointed sphere of helpful energy, of human kindness, and Divine enlightenment. At another it is a field of ghastly struggle, a battle-ground full of cries of wounded men rising through the gathering darkness of death. And both pictures are true. We are summoned to go down into the light and into the shade, to help the wounded, and to rejoice the hearts of the strong, when we have learnt what tyranny of evil it is that strikes men down in needy, joyless lives, and can teach the strong, who know only half their strength, how to unlock the doors of happiness and hope.

a spectacle of mingled strength and weakness, suffering and success, which is itself the strongest appeal to conscience.

II.

COMPETITION, THE LAW OF LIFE.

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."—GEN. i. 27, 28.

THIS is the first command addressed to man—the command to live. It is implied in the creative word that called him into being. Here in the story of Genesis, which gives us the picture of Creation, it is embodied in the first words which are put into the mouth of God as addressed to man. How is the command fulfilled to-day? The spoken word reveals the duty which lies in the nature and position of man, in his desires and his surroundings. How is the duty done? How do we to-day—we, made in the image of God, after His likeness—how do we fulfil the Divine command to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"—in the image of God? How do we fulfil the command to live?

The command to live—how is it obeyed?

The main force in economic life is competition.

The subject of the means by which we live, the system under which the means of life are produced, is familiar to us in one way. It has been made the matter of scientific treatment and inquiry. And though the science which treats of the economic life of men cannot supplant conscience and the law of God as the source of principles of duty, it does show us—what indeed lies before our eyes—a vast and wonderful world of forces which are at work in producing the means of life.

It has been said of nature that "in the very act of labouring as a machine, she also sleeps as a picture." As the imagination travels over the field of the economic life of men described by the economists, there is a picture indeed before the eye of the mind, not less wonderful in features of majestic power, in beauty that ranges from tragic terror to tender loveliness, than the landscape of the visible world. Famine and war, and starvation and despair are included in the story, and in these scenes move love and courage, the incredible patience and the invincible hope which can make beautiful the terrors of death. Every lovely scene of simple country life, the shepherd on the hills, the ploughman in the fields, every home which, however stinted for space, can glorify with the joys of human love the dark places of a crowded

manufacturing town,—all these, too, are gathered into the picture which lies before us, as the answer to the question, How do we live? And here, too, beneath the surface of the picture there are vast forces at work. Lie on a Highland hillside, and the very rocks that are under you tell of a tremendous, age-long work, whose history is traced because we still can see the same forces at the same work to-day. That sleeping world of beauty is alive with powers before which imagination quails. Watch the larches as the life of spring begins to show upon them. That shade of green upon the gray means that there are a thousand thousand buds, in every one of which the gentle force of life is pushing its way; the sleeping world is alive. It is pleasant to lie upon the heather and be still; but you are not alone. In the rustling of every bough you can hear the whispered echo of the command addressed to them, as well as to you, "Be fruitful, and multiply." It is pleasant to lie amid the ease and the comforts of life, and to look on this larger landscape of a human world which supports you, and sustains your life and your enjoyment; but it, too, is a world of living forces; and as the world of nature has been presented by science as the scene of a great struggle for existence, so the first fact we have to meet about this economic world, by and in

which we live, is this—it is a world of competition.

In what sense is this commanded?

And this economic world is a moral world. It is as moral beings that we are concerned with economic life. We have not only to contemplate and to understand the forces that are at work about us; we are responsible for our share in them. That competition is a "law" of the economic world, in the sense that, as a matter of fact, it is a pervading feature of economic life, is plain enough. Competition, as the struggle for the larger share of the means and comforts of life, like the struggle between two men who have hold of opposite ends of the same stick, is certainly a feature of economic life. Competition, in the more precise meaning of the struggle for the power of supplying the means of life and enjoyment to others, is no less so. In this sense, certainly competition is a "law" of the production of the means of life. It is a law, a universally observed and well-established fact, that the means of life are produced by competition. This is how we do live. But we have a further question to ask. We are under a command to live. How, and in what sense, does the command to live carry with it the command to compete? How far, and in what sense, is competition a law, not of fact, but of obliga-

tion and of duty? That is the question with which I propose here to deal.

I have spoken of the command to live. Apart from any history or picture of Creation in the Bible or elsewhere, is it not with the desire to live that we have to do? And is it not the function of moral command and obligation, of conscience and of law, human and Divine, to restrain desire? Certainly the desire to live is the force at work in competition; certainly it is the prerogative of conscience to restrain desire. But the right of conscience to restrain desire arises from this, that it is no alien visitor to human nature, but the enlightened utterance of man's original aim. It is the one supreme, and should be the one dominant, desire—the desire to live well. And the root of its authority is in the very desire which it claims to control. Every desire of the heart of man is in its measure authoritative; and the desire to live, though, as it exists in us, it may run riot and lead us to live ill, is in itself the voice of the Divine command which gave us birth.

The desire to live is a virtual command to live;

The desire to live—that is the force whose working we have to trace, realizing that it is in itself a virtual command, a rudimentary utterance of conscience, a voice of duty and of right. Primarily, and on the face of it, it is an individual

an individual desire,

desire—the desire to maintain and enrich an individual life. It refers to a single self, whose cravings are to be satisfied, whose existence is to be prolonged, whose sphere is to be enlarged. And we all know that it can take forms in ourselves in which it is not only self-regarding, but selfish. But, in any case, it appeals to, it draws from these single sources of spiritual energy, in the single, individual will of the single, individual soul, that wills, by an instinct deeper than desire, its own single, individual self-preservation in bodily life. That is the command that it has not only to carry out, but to justify; that is the object whose attainment has to assume in the course of its working the moral dignity and character which will justify the desire to live. It is here deep down in every one of us, the desire to preserve our own souls in bodily life. It is in its original nature a command. We have to see to it that the self, the soul, which it is our duty to preserve, is such that it can be a duty to preserve it.

but bearing from first to last a social character.

And the history at large of the working of this desire to live is such as to justify its moral character. Individual as it is in its essential nature, appealing direct to the very root and spring of individual life, it is no less essentially social. It is social in the historical surroundings of

its origin. We need go to no far-away age of prehistoric man, we need trace no half-imagined history of early economic life, to know that the desire to live is born where the man is born, in a society, in a family. It grows into consciousness in a life of dependence on others; it breathes in love as the answer to its infant craving; it begins to learn at once, by the response from without which makes explicit the desire from within, what is the stamp and character, the very nature of the being at which it aims. A social life, a life of interdependence, in form however rudimentary, with duties however imperfectly fulfilled, is the only answer which meets the individual desire to live. It is social, then, in its origin and history; it is certainly not less social in its results. By its own necessary working it leads, and has led to the organization of a society, implying in its very existence a certain amount of moral motive and moral action, offering occasion for far more.

Let us look at its work. First of all, as faced with the forces of the world, the command to live becomes the command to labour. Even in this world of toil we can so far put aside the pain and misery of labour as to picture the desire to live, working in a world of labour that should be no

It takes shape as (1) the command to labour;

toil, in which the doom should not yet have been heard, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread." As it stands, it is in no ideal, sinless world that we see the duty of living lead to the duty of work. Among the moral principles commonly recognized in our life, perhaps the soundest and the simplest is found in our apprehension—at least, as regards the poor—of S. Paul's principle, that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat." Certainly, as it stands, man, with this instinct of self-support strong within him, finds himself faced with a world, from which he has to wring his life. The duty of work takes higher forms; but its first and simplest source is in the duty, which is implied in the desire, to live. So, then, the units of our social life, the springs of the force that works in the economic world, have grown from units of desire to units of labour. Each man has to work out his life, to work out his own bodily salvation. You come into the world with this strong instinct and command latent in your soul. Your life lies before you; but you must be at the pains to take it. The world challenges your force, your intelligence, your strength. We see nations and men too so challenged by difficulty and depression, by danger and need; and we rejoice to see the force evoked which enables them to rise, and to work out

their life. They show themselves equal to the duty of living, because they meet the duty of work.

But though, in one aspect, the world of labour is a world of toiling units, each bearing the burden of its own life, there is another side to the picture. Never in any past that we can reach has the individual man laboured to support his own life himself by himself alone. And as soon as industry and economic life begin to have any history at all, we are following forms of combination between man and man, which daily become more intricate and more complex. Face to face with the forces of the world, man, with this desire to live in his heart, is bound not only to labour, but to combine. In a moral consideration of economic life, it is most important to insist that what is commonly called the Division of Labour is first a Combination of Labour. Men combine, they unite their forces to wring their living from the world. And then, because they combine, they organize, telling off this or that man to this or that part of the work. But first they combine; and every step in combination is rightly a step in fellowship, is necessarily a step in opportunities for fellowship. The duty to live has become the duty to labour, and the duty to labour has become the duty to live in fellowship with men with whom you make

(2) the command to combine

a common aim—that all promote the life of each. The wall of isolation, if it was ever there, is broken down. Long and long ago, men were led by the natural working of the moral force within them to see that my desire to live means, and is one with that same desire to live in others who live and work by my side.

and organize.

And next in idea, though, perhaps, by no separate step in history, men combined become men organized; and for the mere instinct and recognition of sympathetic fellowship, we have all the duties and virtues that belong to the mutual subordination of the members of a social body one to another, in which the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee," nor yet the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." Who can estimate the moral value of this advance, or of any step in it? You, the individual soul, we looked at you first as a single unit of desire, feeling instinctively bound to preserve your own existence. You are so still; but what are you more? The multitudes who jostle you in the crowd are no mere struggling units; they are a vast organized body which knows its common needs, and evokes from you, as your fulfilment of your duty to live, the exercise of whatever special faculty there lies in you to fulfil some special need. Your capacity to live is

your privilege to help, and to help in some special way peculiar to yourself, the life, not of yourself, but of mankind. And in the fulfilment of this work, by which you obey the primal command to live, in carrying out into tangible and helpful results the powers that lie dormant in your soul, what do you learn to do? To obey and to rule; to submit to, to sympathize with, to understand, to enter into, the faculties and souls of other men. It is a spiritual body, indeed, to which you belong, traversed from head to foot by spiritual forces, demanding from every member of it obedience to moral laws, giving occasion at every step of its life for obedience to those spiritual principles which are the salvation of the world.

Special forms of organized life.

Already the duty to live leads man, we see, to the dignity of labour, to the truth of fellowship, to the virtues of subordination and organized life. Follow the development in one or two directions a step further on. Labour combined and organized, lightened by fellowship, quickened by the distribution of different offices, gives to men, to some men at least, leisure to think and to enjoy. Life begins to mean more than mere subsistence. There is time for the sight of beauty and the pleasure of living to give birth to all the arts, which minister to those desires, refined or depraved, that grow up in a

luxurious and civilized society. With whatever evils dogging the steps of its progress, life begins to mean something higher, more refined, more intelligent, more cultivated, with deeper, stronger joys.

And all this reacts on the life of labour itself. Leisure lends itself to thought, and the man who has ceased to need to labour for life still likes to labour for more pleasurable life; still finds the world of labour appeals to his intelligence to seek new methods, new directions of work, which may lighten the labour and quicken the enjoyment of the lives of men; still likes to set the redoubled resources won by well-directed labour to work, to enrich men's lives by fresh labour in fresh fields.

And, again, in the allotment of resources by birth and by the reward of work, men find the desire to live taking a new shape in the desire to improve and exercise to the full these resources themselves. The land or the brains that you inherit are before you as a field of life, your own; a field to work in and live in, to give scope and fulness to your life.

It is no part of my purpose here to trace the difficult lines of duty which are laid down for those to whom, through the working of this great economic system, God has given the capital which employs the labour of others, or the talent and power to direct

their labour; or to define the responsibilities of the command of special resources, whether in the ownership of land, or in the unique command of eminent intellectual capacity. All these are matters of duty, and, if so, of Christian duty. But what I wish to point out is that, in all these directions, the original command to man to live out his life is being fulfilled in a more and more intricate system of moral fellowship and interdependence, affording opportunities for public service, for self-sacrifice, for devotion, which might well turn dizzy the consciences of men, who were not used to the spectacle of the use and abuse of these occasions of life, offered to, and taken by men made in the image of God.

But in all this process, what has the command to live become? There it stands still, a command to you to take your part in the original duty of man, to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," a command latent in the strong instinct which you feel in your own soul—to you the first command from God—to live out this being that He has given you, to be a living man, to live. There it stands: it has not passed away. Only, in the course of following out your instinctive obedience to this command, you have learnt something of what was meant by being made "in the image of God."

(3) The command to help;

The command to live remains; it rests upon you, with the full weight of obligation absolutely inseparable from your own personal existence. You, as you are; you, filled by the ministry of men with all the fulness of God; you, fed in body, soul, and spirit, by the labour and thought, by the effort and desire of millions of living human things all over the wide world; you, whose sole, single, individual desire to preserve your own sole, single, individual existence is gratified by all these myriad lives; you, into the very composition of whose soul, into your affections and desires, into your purpose and will, into your very mind and thoughts the affections and wills and minds of millions of mankind have entered in; you, so made and fed; you, living in all this world-wide life—you are bidden to live, to live after your kind, "to be fruitful, and multiply," true to the laws that give you birth, true to the nature and conditions in and by which you live. If, at the day of judgment, you had only this to answer for!—Have you preserved the type? Have you lived your life out? Match in the efforts, in the aims, in the achievements of the life that you have lived, the sources from which that life is drawn, the character that is stamped in your very soul and in the very lineaments of your face.

For what has it made you, in the course of the

ages, in the workings of the Providence of God? What has it made you, this first command, this primal instinct to live? It has made you an instrument to meet the needs of others. This is what the desire to live has, as a matter of fact, grown into and become —a desire to satisfy, in this way or in that, the needs of other men. Are you proud? What is your pride? That you can meet some need of men better than others? Are you cursed by the grip of self-indulgent sin? What is the curse? That whatever of use and help there is in you is paralyzed and dumb. Are you sad and dissatisfied with yourself and with your life? Is it not because, somehow, you know not how —or, you know—you have missed the only life that is a man's life at all, the life in which a man is known to be of use? This is, this has become what life means—to help, to serve the needs of other men. No man pretends to any shadow of self-respect who cannot, at least by some hollow pretence, persuade himself to believe that he is of use. The command to live, the instinct to preserve your own life, has become, has grown into this instinct to seek out the means by which you can serve the lives of other men.

But in the stress and pressure of our human struggle for existence, this is not all. The command

to live is not only the command to serve; it is the command to be pre-eminent, the command to excel. Incidentally it is the command to surpass others; and competition, in that view, is subordinate always to the main purpose, which is served by competition in any view, the purpose of help, the purpose of service, the purpose of co-operation, the purpose of love. But, positively and essentially, the command and the desire to live have become in the working of the wisdom of God the command and the desire to do the best. Not better, but best; not better than others, but so well that none can do better. It is the command to do what is above praise, what contains and embodies your whole and highest self, your best wisdom, your most earnest energy, your most sincere and perfect good will.

and in this help to excel; —this is the positive aim of competition.

And it is on this last outcome of the working of that first command, of that primal instinct, to live, that, in conclusion, I would dwell. The command to live is, has become, in the course of the development of our economic life, the command to excel in the service of others.

This is the outcome of all our consideration. Your life is bound up with the lives of other men. This eager, keen striving towards life, towards success, enjoyment, happiness, repose, has to

Hence, your work must be true;

satisfy itself by satisfying, in some way, the same striving in other men. It is on this striving in other men that you depend. You will not play them false? You will not for bread give them a stone? You will let your work be true? Mind to mind we meet in this intercourse of interdependent life. Your intelligence, your wit, your skill, and theirs, are interchanged. Will you use these powers to trick and to deceive? If so, do not blink the fact, you are a traitor to the laws of life. In the stress and confusion of life, in the intricate complexity of the division of labour, you may give men false work for true, without being found out, without suffering for it in the way in which, if the machinery of our economic life were perfect, you would suffer for it at once. But you are false to the law of life, false to the true principle of this social system which the command to live has produced, false to the law by which you live. This is false competition, not true competition. True competition may sometimes, or often lead to your neighbour's loss, and call for the intervention of a higher principle. But even then the loss will be open and above board. First, then, in obeying the command to excel in the service of others, your work must be what it professes to be—it must be true.

it must be good;

And next, it must be good; it must minister to life according to the best of your powers and of your knowledge. Think, again, by what you are living—by the working of men's striving after life. You can never say, "Am I my brother's keeper? Let him have what he asks for, and is content to take. It is not for me to decide whether it is good or no." In the Providence of God, in the working of the command and the desire to live, you are your brother's keeper. And as surely as you would be to blame if you were a physician, and gave in to the disordered appetites of a body and a soul diseased; as surely as you would be to blame if you let your ignorant child climb the cliff, or plunge into the river, where he would meet his death; so surely, if you knowingly and deliberately live by giving to your brother-man what ministers to death, and not to life, his blood lies at your door. We see it so, do we not? But do we see it of all the poor, weak, second-rate stuff with which we impoverish the lives of men, with which we mock our brother's need, while we take care to satisfy our own? "It is good:" —that is what God said of His provision for the needs of men. "It is good:"—that is what you have to be able to say of your work by which you live. It is good in kind; it helps towards life, and not towards

death. And, further, it is good in quality; it is not like a broken reed to lean on, or a roof that will not keep out wind and weather; it is sound, and strong, and good of its kind; it is such as you would have yourself for your own need.

At least, and last of all, it is your best; the best that you can do to help, in your own appointed way, the lives of other men. On the one side here, in you, is this strong striving after life. Who shall say what it can absorb; who shall say what more it can desire, if it be fed and tended truly and well, if it be not choked and stupefied with provision of evil? And beyond, over against you, there are these same desires in other men. Towards them let your whole soul go out. In serving them let your whole self be spent, for this is life, the fruitfulness of love. If you lived by your own effort, if your own sole will must meet the needs of your own sole desire, what would it not be worth to live indeed—to quicken and satisfy to the full all your capacities and desires? What would it be worth? Not half as much as it is now, to live indeed, by launching out into the lives of men—your brothers, who live and work for you—your whole effort, your best mind, and knowledge, and purpose, and skill, and heart's desire.

it must be your best.

Do your best. You may, or may not succeed, as you now count success. But, at least, you "feed the high tradition of the world, and leave your spirit in your children's breasts." And it is not failure; it is life. Love and good will, honest and true work, are never wasted, never lost. Let there be no reserve; cast them out upon your world, your thought and power, and will and heart; live them out, let them go; they will find a home, and make storage of resources in the hearts and lives of men, you know not when, you know not how. Weak, heartless, mindless, thoughtless work is waste. Put your soul into what you do, and see that it be such that you can put your soul into it. However humble be your place in the economic body, you serve the life of men; and not least in serving do you show yourself to be made in the image of God, Who was among men as he that serveth. You deal with men in what you do, and at every turn there is room for vigorous effort, for sincerity and truth, for the kindly flash of soul to soul, by word and glance. Live your life out as it is. Do your best with it, as God has made it, as men have made it, as you yourself have made it. Never fear. "Be fruitful and multiply," even if God shall give you to learn that the law of fruitfulness is life through death,

This is the fulfilment of the command to live—to do your best for the help of men.

and that "that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." It may be that the body and soul in which you live, the heart and mind and will are stained and scarred, bound and paralyzed by wrongs to men, false service, cruel sins. There was One once Who said, "I am the Life," Who came that we might have life, the saving law of Whose Divine descent into our world of death was this: "I come to do Thy Will, O God." He carried through life to the Cross the sins of all mankind. He made there upon the Cross the great repentance of mankind, ending so the life of which they said, "He went about doing good." Ending? Not ending. That death to sin was but the door of new life from which that same power to do good should issue triumphant, to work at large throughout the world in every soul that gives itself to Him. To some men, more plainly than to others, the command to live which Christ obeyed when He lived out His life to death upon the Cross, has to be obeyed by repentance that is like a death, and, like His death, leads to a new life. But for all men alike the command to live leads in the last resort to the command to love, to die to self, to live for other men the life of sacrifice, the life of self-devotion, rising to new powers, to the light and glory of the life of those "whose life is hid with Christ in God."

III.

JUSTICE, THE LAW OF EXCHANGE.

"Thou knowest the commandments, . . . Do not steal, . . . Defraud not."—S. Mark x. 19.

The society created to serve the needs of life lives by exchange, and so brings us under the command to be just.

The first command under which we live is the command to live itself—that creative command which called man into being, and bade him "be fruitful and multiply." That command speaks in the being of every single man, in the necessity, which is both a desire and a duty, to provide for his own existence. In the workings of God's Providence, this need, this desire, which is a virtual command, to live, has led to the growth of the vast system of combined and divided labour in and by which we do live. It has built up a great society to satisfy the needs of life. We may well be asked in our dealings one with another, to be true to the purpose which has brought us together—the purpose to provide for life; to see to it that we follow out

the spirit of this social system, by which alone our own desire for life is satisfied and filled. But when once we recognize that the command to live, which we know as a strong and irresistible desire in our own souls, has brought us into these close relations with our fellows, we hear the voice of a fresh command claiming to govern, at the cost of any sacrifice of desire and of life, all that we do one to another—the command to be just. We are members of a vast society for the production of the necessities and comforts and pleasures of life, but this membership means a constant give and take between one man and another; this society lives upon exchange of one man's work against another, and the law of exchange is, Be just.

Wider and narrower idea of justice.

It is on this aspect, then, of the system by which we live, that I wish now to dwell, that it is a system of exchange. This is pre-eminently and obviously true of this one part of our life, of the system by which we all, as a matter of fact, support the existence of the body. Here, plainly, the system by which we do live is a system of exchange, calling for the exercise of justice. But it may be well to note that there is a wider sense, in which it is true to say that life is an exchange, indicated by the double meaning of the word "justice" itself. We call a man just, who, in the

ordinary matters of business and commerce, gives a fair return for what he gets. But we say also that "the just shall live by faith;" we seek to be justified, or made just by God; we speak of Christ, "Who died the Just for the unjust;" and here we are dealing with a wider justice, which is co-extensive with virtue, and reaches up to holiness itself. The duty of justice, in the narrower sense of giving a fair return for what we get, is important enough; but it gains dignity when we see that it is this duty which gives the name to the complete fulfilment of all duty; that it is a quality of no narrow range, confined to the sordid means of earthly life, but that it grows and expands with every spiritual advance of man, and is never left behind—not when we deal with the relations of man to God, not even when we strive to apprehend the nature of God Himself. The narrower virtue of justice, the justice of fair dealing in the give and take of trade, is connected, not merely by a common name, with the attribute of God. It is as though men began by living within themselves, each in their own small plot, from which they gained their life; and then learnt by need to depend one on another, to work together, to live by exchange of the means of life; and then found that this exchange was the body of a higher and nobler soul, the exchange

of mind and will, of affection and love; and then saw how, in all this, man was dealing with another member in the great exchange of life—with Him from Whom he receives all things, and to Whom he must render back himself. Is it not true? Is not marriage an exchange—life for life? Are not the relations of father and mother and son an exchange, each with endless possibilities of wrong, each the sphere of a justice which even love can never leave behind? I do not believe we can find any region of our life at all, in which this does not come as a supreme and vital question—Have I given the fair return for what I have received? Certainly we do not leave it behind in our relations to God. When it pleased Him to take the first step in the history of the revelation of Himself in Christ, He revealed Himself—how? In a covenant, in a contract; as though He would say, "This is the fundamental law of My Being; this is the truth about Me which you must learn once for all, and must never forget. I am He Who makes a fair bargain, and keeps it; I am Just." When we shall reach the last consummation of our hope in Christ, we shall have realized for ever the Eternal Exchange—God in us, and we in Him.

It is this same quality which rules our conduct in the common exchange of material and earthly

things in daily life. "Thou knowest the commandments, . . . Defraud not." This vast system of industry and commerce by which we live, has grown up in obedience to the dictates of the desire of life. The combined action and pressure of this strong craving for life—life more intense, more joyous, more complete—has called the system into being, in accordance with which we provide, not each for our own lives, but each for the lives of others, and exchange the produce of our work. But when this result has come about, and when I stand face to face with my brother-man, he and I to live by giving and taking each the produce of the labour of the other, there is a new force called into play. The interchange of life has forced us to find common ground; the desire to live, the original motive, the original command of God implanted in the nature of man, is still there; and by the side of it, and above it, there rises a new command, a new desire—the desire to live rightly. Conscience has come into play. This blind, strong passion for life, which is the first great motive force at work in all the economic system, centred in every individual soul, finds that there arises out of the very heart of it, when man is face to face with man in the exchange by which each feeds his need, a new and authoritative desire, which says, "You must do

Exchange calls conscience into play,

right." This is what conscience is—the instinctive recognition, when the spirit of man finds itself face to face with the spirit of another man, or with the Spirit of God, that there is a bond, an "ought," which binds his action, and to which desire must yield. It is a revelation from within; it rises up at the first touch of common life. That blind desire for life did not know where it was leading us, when it forced us, by sheer need, to live each by the labour of others; it was leading us before a judgment seat. From the sight of that judge we shall never escape, when we have once learnt that man, to live at all, must live a social life, nor from the hearing of the voice that says, "You ought," or "You ought not." I state this here simply as a general fact. I appeal to your own experience. Man is, in fact, no isolated thing, no unit of merely selfish desire. But, assuming this desire for the service of one's own life as the first force—as the command from God to live is the first command—I ask you to see that, as a matter of fact and of inner experience, each of us, living as we do by constant exchange with our fellow-men, finds that this life cannot be lived in mere obedience to the desire to live, and to live as best we can; but there is heard within us another voice, a voice that says, "You must do right." To live, you must profit by the labour of others; to

profit by the labour of others, you must exchange, you must give in return for what you take. Give what? I claim that there is a voice within every one of us which says, "Give what is just."

Why does conscience come in here, where the social character of life begins? What does it mean by "just"? Who is to determine what it means? and by appeal to what authority? All these are further questions. First, let us take the fact, conscience is here, and in all the exchange of life does say, "In return for what you take, give what is just." I say, insist on the fact, because the fact is virtually challenged, and we must meet the challenge. All this part of our life—the system of combined and divided labour, the system of exchange by which we support our bodily existence—has been for many years matter of discussion in books, under the name of Political Economy. This science describes, for instance, here, how exchange *does* take place, how prices and wages, and interest and rent *are* fixed. It does not profess to say what price or what wages ought to be paid; it only tells you how to determine what will be paid. Only, if there is an iron system according to which it will be determined what price shall be given for what commodities, and what reward for what services, it does not seem to be much use our

in the field which Political Economy describes,

asking, "What is just?" or "What ought to be paid?" And so the scientific account of the matter, which has become, in one shape or another, matter of common knowledge, colouring, I will venture to say, the thoughts and opinions and practice of all of us—the scientific account of the matter does present a virtual challenge to the claim of conscience to determine what we ought to do in these particular matters of duty between man and man. But I think I can show you that there is no real challenge involved in the teaching of economic science on the matter. The only mistake is, that perhaps we have not let our consciences, each in our own sphere, have their say as to what we ought to do, and, consequently, the rule of what is done has slid into the place of the rule of what ought to be done; and the rule of what is done is not so near the rule of what ought to be done as it is our business to make it.

Well, then, the means by which price or wages, or any return in the give and take of economic life is fixed, are these: On the one side, the service done, the commodity or useful thing produced, must be repaid with the equivalent of what it took to produce it; on the other side, a man will be content, if he can, to give for the service or the commodity the equivalent of what it is worth to him, in comparison with other

services or other commodities which he needs for the support or enjoyment of life. On this side the price is fixed by the exact estimate on the part of a number of buyers, who are able to buy at the cost it takes to produce the thing, of the comparative usefulness of this and other things: on the other side by the exact estimate on the part of a number of sellers of what it will take to repay them for the trouble of producing the thing. I need not follow out how these forces work. Plainly they are the forces that fix what is paid. What will the people who buy think it worth while to give? What will the people who sell think it worth while to take? The only point to which I wish to call your attention, is this. On either side there enters into the force that fixes what is paid, a man's estimate of what is to be paid. It is not the estimate of one man, I know; it is the estimate of many: but multitudes are made of individuals, and common standards are the outcome of individual standards. And, as a matter of fact, within the memory of living men, the standard of what is the comparative usefulness to men of this or that commodity, the standard of what is fair repayment of the pains that it takes to produce the things we need, has altered. Why has it altered? Because, one by one, men have learnt to change their estimate. And I

maintain that, in the laws which fix what shall be paid, you will never find any force said to be at work into which the minds and wills and consciences of men do not enter. The force is the common will of these units.

Well, then, I claim that conscience is not excluded; that its authority is challenged only in the sense that Political Economy cries aloud to it, "Here is your field." If the laws of Political Economy are iron, it is because men are iron; the laws are only statements of how men do act as matter of fact. "Oh, but we shall never change the ways in which men act!" What shall I answer? "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Or shall I say, rather, "You have changed them"? The common conscience is keener and more awake, and has a higher standard than it used to have, and our economic life is more just, in consequence. It is a vast work. Of course it is. It is life—nothing less—to strive by the best we can do, each in our own sphere, to lift the lives of men. Have faith in the individual conscience and will; they are the voice and the power of God. It is through these you see that He rules this economic world. Each individual can do little, though some individuals can do much. But each individual can do something. It is of grains of sand that continents

and leaves open to conscience;

are built. Each individual can say, "To the best of my lights I will be just."

"I will be just." Let us look now what it means. I have in me, from God, the command to live, implanted as a deep desire in my soul. It leads me to depend on others; the sheer need of individual life leads me to social life, leads me to see that I am not, I do not exist as, I cannot live as, a mere unit. I am part and parcel with this man over against me. From him I am to get what I need; from me he gets what he needs. What shall determine, then, what I give for what? What should determine, but that common soul which makes us have a common need, which makes us able to combine to attain it? What should determine, but some voice of this body to which it turns out, in the working of the need of life, we both belong? And this is conscience, the voice of the common soul, the voice of the Universal Mind, the voice of God, "in Whom we live and move and have our being," the voice of Him in Whom we are "members one of another."

and conscience commands justice,

And this voice says, "Be just." What does justice mean? Justice is, first, an interchange of good. Exchange is a feature in the system by which we combine to live. The whole reason of it is that it feeds, it ministers to life.

which is (1) an interchange of good;

Its spirit, then, is the spirit of good will. We meet for a common good, I and the man with whom I have to agree. We do not meet as enemies. Unless the exchange is to be an exchange of good, its whole purpose is gone. We come into it, not with a grudging sense of necessity, but gladly welcoming a help. We are stronger, richer, wiser, because we can combine to exchange. We live a thousand lives in one, because our life is not shut within the narrow barriers of our personal power to provide. We are the gainers; we come to meet the man who brings our gain. The fruit of this system of exchange between you and me comes from three sources—your force, and my force, and the force of our combination. The combination itself is a good; it is a multiplying, an enriching power; and you who, as simply you, are but another unit in the world besides myself, as the person with whom I am to exchange, come to me clothed in this character of blessing—you bring to me, and I to you, the gain and strength of union. And the union is not only the source and multiplying power of good; it is itself a good. We break out of the dismal toil of solitary lives, through this social act of exchange, into a world of sympathy and fellowship. So, then, we meet, if we know what we are about, in the spirit of good will. It is impossible

to insist on this too much, it is impossible to exaggerate the fruits which will follow—fruits material and spiritual—in any individual life, in which a man chooses to lay this down as the principle on which he will always act—"Wherever I have dealings with man, we will meet, so far as lies in me, in the spirit of good will. It is impossible to exaggerate the moral and material mischief which has followed because of the effect made on the imaginations of men by the common picture of the economic world, as a world in which my hand is against every man, and every man's hand against me." It will often cost you stern spiritual struggles to insist on this standard with yourself—that you meet every man with whom you have to do in the spirit of mutual good will. But every day you do it, you will have made one step more towards learning what the Apostle meant when he said, "Ye have the mind of Christ." This, then, is the first step—just men meet as those who are interchanging good.

(2) according to mutual agreement;

The next step in justice is this: The standard of a just exchange is mutual agreement. Justice is mutually agreed upon interchange of good. I have said that exchange, because it is the discovery that we have a common, not a separated life, necessarily involves the appeal to a common

standard. Because the organ which declares this standard is in each, exchange, to be just, to conform to this standard, must be matter of mutual agreement. When God made that first revelation of His justice to Abraham, of which we have already spoken, He made a covenant. And in a covenant, what is given and taken on either side, the interchange of good, is open and declared, as the result of agreement. This is, in fact, the character of justice, the character of the fair man—that I should do, not merely what I think to be fair towards another, but what I have good reason to believe he and I would both think to be fair. When do we appeal to law to step in between us? When the one man has done what he thinks right, but the other does not think it right; when the one man has done what he does not consider to be against the contract, actual or implied, but the other does consider it to be against the contract. What is the kind of injustice which excites our highest indignation? Is it not when a man has made an agreement with us, knowing that he made it in one sense and we understood it in another?

Nevertheless, it is not an easy thing to do to live by this standard. Even if we never felt inclined to dispute the principle—and we do—it is very difficult to apply it thoroughly and consistently in practice.

In the complex and intricate system of division of labour by which we live, mutual agreement in fact on a thousand essential matters of detail is impossible. If I go into a shop to buy any commodity, I have of sheer necessity to trust the man of whom I buy to know for me, in a number of important details, what is the kind of article which I ought to be content to take at the price. He knows his business; I don't know his business. The just man will make it the business of his conscience to see that he and I both—not he alone, but he and I both—are the gainers by his knowing the business of his trade. It is not you to judge, and I to judge, and, when we differ, another judge to be called in. That other judge sits in your soul and in mine. We may not listen to his voice, but we cannot blind his eyes.

And we do feel disposed to dispute the principle, that what is mutually agreed upon is just, from this same reason. We say, "A man might not think himself well-used if he knew what it was I was giving him for his money; but he does not know my business or its difficulties; he couldn't judge. I, and I alone, can know and decide." That is anything else you like, but it is not justice. It may be the fruit of a system which is very hard to fight against and change. And in fighting

against it you may have to make sacrifices to justice. If you have, face them and fear not; but hold, at least, by this—that you will never let yourself profess to judge by yourself, and without bringing into the court of conscience the best advocate you can for the cause of your neighbour. Or, again, we feel disposed to dispute the principle because a man is prejudiced and wrong-headed; he compels us to take the law into our own hands. Well, if you are ever prejudiced and wrong-headed—and you must contemplate the possibility—and have to look back on some dispute in which you must acknowledge that it was so, and that a plain and ordinary agreement with you was out of the question, how will the man have acted towards you, of whom you will say, "That man was just. I provoked him, but he kept his head, and he kept his heart straight, and I was not really the loser"? That is the test. Act so.

And difficulties like these occur, not only between individual men, but between classes of men—between different branches of a trade, or different trades, or between employers and labourers, or lenders and borrowers. And here, more than ever, cases arise in which your individual conscience, or that collective conscience of this trade or other body to which you

belong, has to be trustee for the other party in a mutual agreement. Wherever, for instance, there are questions of what is just between the different classes, whom the rapid commercial development of the last hundred years has estranged from any real knowledge of each others' life, what a responsibility lies upon the man who has to say, "So far I will go, and no further; so much I will demand of life and comfort and ease as my claim and share, so much I will allow as his"! Well, there the responsibility does lie, upon each party to the settlement, to see to it that, so far as he is concerned, the settlement is such as both would agree upon if all was open and the barriers were down. You cannot change the collective judgment of your profession or your trade all at once; but do what you can, and keep the end in view. And if we are to do what we can to forward the cause of justice, and to spread the rule of God, let us, at least, love the daylight, not the dark. Let us work for open ways. Justice is at home in daylight. Here, and here alone, can mutual agreement be absolute and real, where there is nothing concealed or to conceal. Every step towards mutual knowledge on the part of the different members of the economic body of the real life, and needs, and methods, and difficulties, and temptations of the rest,

is a step towards the recognition and the reality of that justice between man and man, which is the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

But, after all, it may be asked, in all these matters between man and man, where is the standard to be found? Mutual agreement is the method by which it is to be found; but where is either my conscience or my neighbour's to look for it? and what likelihood is there that we shall agree, that we shall look for it or find it in the same place? The answer to this question is the very soul and substance of what I have to say. There is no standard of justice outside justice itself. Would you find it?—find God, Who is the Just One. How shall you find Him and His justice?—through your conscience, and your neighbour's, which He has set to be the voices of His justice here in earth. Do you ask what is, in fact and substance, just between man and man, between class and class? For you the answer lies in what your conscience will tell you to-morrow, and the next day, and the day after—till you die, and the record is written with which you shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. God's Law and God's Will are the standard. Justice is the Mind of God. Justice is what your conscience tells you to be just, because you were made in the image of God, and are

(3) of conscience, which knows the Mind of God.

renewed by Christ in the image in which you were created; and this image and likeness is, that you know and love what is good, and see and abhor what is evil. Day by day, and year by year, and century by century, as the ages pass, God writes in the hearts and lives, and builds up in the laws and institutions of men, so much of that Eternal Mind, of that Eternal Good, which He Himself, in His own Essence, is—so much as these single souls will let Him, on Whom rests yesterday, or to-morrow, or to-day, the trust of the oracles of God.

Where shall justice be found? It shall be found in God, through Christ, by souls who will look and anxiously discern between good and evil, between right and wrong, till the diviner vision grows in the inner eye of the soul, and you begin to guess what He meant when He said that you shall know as you are known.

This is no imaginary answer, it is no trick or artifice of argument. "The just shall live by faith;" and shall not they that live by faith, by faith be just? Meet your neighbour in this spirit. You meet for good—for his and yours; you meet, at every minute of the day, in every shade of expression on your face, and in every tone of your voice, which plays its part in the transactions of life, to find by the joint efforts of

that organ of the Divine Mind which is in each, the justice which—here and now, in this bargain that you strike, in the promise which you make and keep, in the price, the wage, you demand, receive, or pay—becomes a fact, an actual living visible embodiment, here before the eyes of men, of the eternal glory of God.

"Thou knowest the commandments." Long ago they were written on the stones of Sinai. Far, far away before that, when, in the eternal counsels of God, it was decreed that man should be made in that image in which God should be made Man, it was decreed that they should be written, too, in the fleshy tables of the heart of every man that should live upon the earth. The writing is blurred, is it, in you? The healing Hand of Christ upon your soul will make it plain. You shall hear the voice if you will listen; you shall be renewed in His likeness if you will use His grace. He shall say to you, in words that you cannot mistake, "This is the way; walk ye in it," and you shall know that this God is your God for ever and ever, and that He will be your guide until death.

IV.

LOVE, THE LAW OF DISTRIBUTION.

"Beloved, let us love one another."—1 John iv. 7.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." That is the first picture—the rich man and the poor man side by side. We all know the picture which follows—the companion picture of the rich man and the poor man, with the great gulf between. What was the rich man's sin? He is not described as doing anything wrong. The words of our English translation are, if anything, a little hard on him. We may say that all we know about him is this—he was beautifully dressed, he lived a life of good cheer, bright, brilliant, splendid. There is no hint of any sin, of extrava-

The facts of distribution are, rich and poor side by side.

gance, of dishonesty, of excess, of gross and sensual passion. Any of these may have been there, but we know nothing of them; they are foreign to the purpose of his story. We know that he was rich; that, in his dress, he liked what was handsome and refined; that he lived a pleasant, happy, brilliant life; and this is all. No; there is one thing besides; there was the poor man at his gate, and—no more. They were side by side, and that is all; the facts are left to speak for themselves. There the facts are, there they were in our Lord's time, and there they are still, in the industrial society of to-day, in the modern city—the poor we have always with us. Here the facts are—rich and poor side by side; they still speak for themselves. It is those to whom they do not speak who would "not hear, though one rose from the dead."

These were the facts set out in this immortal picture. What were the principles He meant to teach? What was the rich man's sin? The only thing we know against him is purely negative; we do not know that he cared for the poor at his door. Would he have ceased, do you think, to be tormented in that flame of terrible remorse, if he could have remembered that he had taken pains to see that Lazarus got those crumbs from his table which he sat and longed for?

Is this the teaching of the facts—"Take care that the leavings of your luxury find their way to those who are in want"? Do you think it was to teach us this, that our Lord drew this terribly simple picture of rich and poor side by side?

Rich and poor side by side. Economic science has analyzed the causes which produce this result, and we are apt to come away with the idea that economic laws produce this contrast of wealth and poverty side by side, and that at this point, where the rich man sees the poor man at his gate, Christian charity should come in—charity which gives the crumbs.

"Law" is sometimes a misleading word. The economic laws which produce this result are laws of fact, not laws of right. They state that, given the operation of certain motives among men, certain tendencies will be at work, and the issue of these tendencies is in this sharp contrast of wealth and poverty. The question what you or I ought to do brings us face to face with quite a different kind of law—the law of right, which is a part of the very nature and being of God, which His command lays upon men, which speaks in their consciences when they come face to face with the facts which bring it into play, which speaks in law and prophecy, to arouse, to awaken, to revive the voice of conscience itself. The

laws which have to be obeyed are the laws of eternal right, the laws of conscience, and of God.

But are not economic laws laws of God—the laws by which He governs the world of human life, just as He governs the physical world by the laws which bring the rain-drops from the sky, and carry them down in rivers to the sea? Yes; the economic laws which produce this contrast of riches and poverty side by side, are Divine laws—in a sense. These natural laws we think it wrong not to counteract, when they do not work for human health and happiness. We drain the water off our land, we carry it whither we see good; we dam and bank in our rivers; we do not treat a noxious swamp side by side with a splendid city as a result of the working of Divine laws, with which it would be impious to interfere. We may, at least, do so much with the economic laws. Laws of God they are, laws of Divine allowance—allowance of evils which we are left to cure; laws of Divine long-suffering with the sins and weaknesses of men, ruling the scene of misguided forces and wasted good, which the light of the knowledge of God's love in Christ is meant to rule, to make fruitful, and to bless. Laws of Divine command they are not—those laws which, in this and in every other field of human action, we

have to seek for and to find, to live by and to realize in fact.

In face of these facts, we are under the command to love.

What the laws of Divine command are in the region of our economic life, we have already seen in part. The Divine law is not a fixed code, issued once for all; it is a gradual growth, a gradual discovery; emerging as the creative conscience, in virtue of which man is the image of God, comes face to face with facts, and, in the facts, with God; feels His Spirit move upon it, and, at each stage in the revelation of law and right, receives, in the unveiling of some new feature in the Eternal likeness, the sanction of the Divine command.

The first command is the command to live—a command which rests, not upon the individual, but upon the human community. The springs of its working are in the individual will, but the individual is addressed and is bidden to live as a member of a community. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The desire which answers to this command, is the primary economic force, the desire of life. This is the first word of conscience when man finds himself face to face with the means of life—the command to live, addressed to the community of men.

Next we find that in living out this common life,

in the work of producing and using together the means of life, we are living by exchange; and conscience gives out, in the face of the fact of exchange, the command, "Defraud not; be just. In the exchange of life give to another what is recognized as due, by that mutual agreement of your conscience and his which makes them the voice of the Eternal Justice and Right."

And now, lastly, we come to the final facts, the broad result in the distribution of the good things of the world. Looking away from the individual acts of exchange, in which, we will suppose, we have striven to act justly; looking at the way in which the first command to "be fruitful, and multiply" is actually fulfilled in the mass of human life, rich and poor, which we have before us to-day, we have before us facts which bring into play a new command—the command which Dives broke—the Christian law, "Love one another."

The love commanded is a constructive principle.

It commands no mere amiable sentiment; it is an exacting principle. Conscience, which has carried us thus far in the organization of the working world in which we produce together and exchange, due for due, the means of life, does not here subside into the utterance of a vague and meaningless platitude; it retains its sternly

practical character, and yet rises to a command above the level, it would seem, to which we are apt to confine a conscience too mechanically conceived. Conscience is but the awakening in man as, in the experience of life, he comes face to face with God, of the Divine wisdom and goodness as a working, organizing power. It is the same faculty still, when it becomes the voice of that principle which in the Christian Creed is the originative and organizing principle of the world—the principle of love. Love is no mere accidental corrective. We are not to live for ourselves in all our work, and in the organization of our common life, and then produce our charity to redress the worst anomalies which result. It is an organizing principle, in the light of which we have perpetually to review, to reconstitute, to rearrange the whole of our life.

But can *we* reconstitute the economic world—this intricate system of interdependent interests, spreading like a vast network of natural irrigation over the whole field of human life? The supposition is absurd. Plead that absurdity, if you dare, as a reason for leaving the principle of love, as a ruling, and not a mere corrective principle, out of any part of your life. It is God's work to change the world? Yes; and you know how, and how alone, God's work is

done—by single souls that accept His Will and live by His law; and upon every single soul there rests the responsibility of answering the question, as regards men between whom and himself already the great gulf begins to yawn—in practice, in the daily business of life, do you "love your neighbour as yourself," do you make your neighbour's good your end?

The principle of love in economic concerns means the law of help, the law of co-operation. With co-operation as an industrial system, I have nothing to do. It may be the best or the worst way of carrying out economic principles, of attaining economic ends. It has helped, indeed, to envisage the moral principle on which I wish to dwell; but it is with that moral principle itself, and not with any particular method of carrying it out, that we have here to do, and the principle is, that we live and work for mutual help. We are so certain to find this principle a stern and exacting law, that we may safely say, to start with, that, in our economic life as it stands, we shall find a much fuller operation of the principle of help than the ordinary scientific description of economic life would lead us to believe. Let us examine what this law of love amounts to and demands.

Its law is the law of help;

1. The first utterance of the law of help is this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" —that is to say, you must identify your neighbour's interest with your own. This law grows naturally enough out of the relations of just exchange. Justice between man and man implies the recognition of a common standard as to what is due from each to each. This recognition of a common standard of right arises out of the recognition of a common good in the common pursuit of which they are combined; and in the recognition of this common standard each becomes the guardian of the other's good. Each man is the natural guardian of the interests of those with whom he deals; that is the truth against which the old instinct of antagonism springs up in us again and again, and cries, "Am I my brother's keeper?" If not, who is? Between you and him the whole transaction lies. Is it a sheer fight, each to get the most he can? Is each seeking the other's loss? We revolt from such a misrepresentation of the life of human commerce, in which we know that the spirit of good will, when it is present, is no incongruous intruder. Where is it, then? In you towards him, in him towards you—in each good will. You will his good; that is your part in the transaction, as a moral transaction at all—that

i.e. (1) identify your neighbour's interest with your own;

is, you are the guardian of his interest. Look at any of the great industrial enterprises of to-day—the bridge that is just being completed across the Tay, or the still more wonderful creation, transcending the old wonders of the world, which is to span the Forth. Wonders they are—wonders of sheer magnitude, wonders of skill, wonders for the daring they demand in those who plan and in those who carry them out. But there is a greater wonder still. The work is good; those who work it know it to be good, and for its own sake put into it the best energy of brain, heart, and hand, proud to bear a part in a benefit to men. Measure even by the moral indignation with which we should learn that any of them had been false to the high vocation to which they feel themselves to be called, how deep the conviction is in our minds that the man who works, and the man who sells, are the guardians of the good of those for whom they work and those to whom they sell. There opens at every turn before a man who is engaged in this continual give and take of due for due, of wage for work, and work for wage, of price for commodity, and commodity for price, this vision of a higher level to which all his life is raised, as he sees it to be the exacting duty and the crowning privilege of his life to seek the good of others. It is an identification, not an identity

of interests. Your good and your neighbour's good are not on the first blush the same; there is a moral effort needed, a constant strain, it may be a struggle, after the dignity of the higher aim. But if we fail of it we feel ourselves degraded; we hide rather than parade what we know to be our shame. It is a better life that loves the light; and our transactions cannot reach after that moral glory and perfection in which they may challenge the scrutiny of men and the final judgment of God, unless each man is striving towards this as the ideal of his commerce with his kind—that each man should make the good of the other his own, his end.

(2) pursue it, if need be, at the sacrifice of your own;

2. And this principle, again, leads us a step further still. Our neighbour's good must be made our own, always in spirit, sometimes in stern fact, at the sacrifice of what seems to be our own. That sacrifice is demanded by the law of help, by the law of love, by the law which is the life of God, whose breach is the eternal death of the likeness of God in man. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Let us translate it afresh. You ought to be ready to make any and every sacrifice for those with whom you deal, which you would accept and approve if it were made for you. We have an easy answer for those who, ignorant of the real life of commerce and Christianity alike, would consider sacrifice an incon-

gruous idea in commercial concerns. Sacrifice in commerce? Well, commerce is the *life* of commercial men —of all men, in so far as they live by the ordinary commerce on which we all depend. Are you to banish Christianity from the life of commercial men? Christ came to show men what love is, and to enable them to live in it. He showed it by sacrifice. He enables men to make sacrifices, to their wives, to their children, to those they love, to those they pity, to the miserable and degraded, sunk in sin—but not to their customers? Are these, then, not their neighbours? The main part of the life of many men is commerce; an essential part of the life of all of us is commerce; and is *the* distinctive Christian principle, the principle of sacrifice, to have no concern with commerce? No one can seriously maintain this solemn excommunication of large classes of human beings, this curse of godlessness, cast as a ban upon whole regions of human life. We have only to state it, to see it to be what it is—a preposterous absurdity. We may sometimes, perhaps often, give in to the idea, as we give in, without thought or care, to many another cynical and accursed fallacy that floats suspended like a poisonous miasma in the mixed atmosphere of common feeling and opinion, but we don't believe anything of the kind to be true.

The great and obvious sacrifices may be rare; the demand for them may be rare. When they come they may be difficult to make. A sacrifice is difficult to make, or it would not be a sacrifice at all. The power to make them when they do come, to put forth the strength of the Spirit, and rise to share the privilege of the Son of God, comes out of a life, in which the devotion of life to others is a constant, dominating principle, the soul and spring of hope and purpose and desire. This is the effort, this is the call, this is the height of the vocation of those whose life it is to feed the lives of men, to pass their days in that continual give and take of work for work, of life for life, in which the spirit of self-devotion can find, has found, and is meant to find, its own familiar home. The soldier must die, rather than leave his post in battle. What would you say of him if, at a critical moment, he left his post because he did not think he would receive his pay? If commerce claims a place in Christian life, this means that the man who engages in it pursues and lives for an end, a good to other men, which he will never sacrifice for anything, and to make sacrifices for which, on due occasion, is an outcome of the normal working of the Spirit of Christ in his soul and life. Only, if you would not have that Spirit fail in you at need, dignify

with a true estimate of its high purpose and life-sustaining function the daily work of the profession to which you give your life. Let the spirit of self-devotion to the good of others, which must carry you through crises where the choice lies between heroism and treason, consecrate, pervade, and bless, with the beneficent presence of the Spirit of Love, the good works which God has ordained for you to walk in them.

(3) in so doing you will find the energy of love to be the energy of life.

But, meanwhile, what has become of that keen desire for life, which we know as the first moving force of the economic system—that eager striving after fuller, richer life, whose movement is sanctioned by the Divine command, "Be fruitful, and multiply"? The units of this force are in the individual souls and bodies, striving each for their own sustenance in life. Are they to be led on until they find this first impulse wholly lost, in a demand for the devotion to others of the life which they seek to maintain? Is this the end of that development which the soul must follow, under the stress of a moral necessity, in the growing light of a conscience whose demand becomes more exacting the higher the level to which we will consent to rise? The end—almost the end—the end, if we will see it to be indeed the end. We desire life: this, it turns out,

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is what life means, this is what life is—not the highest merely, not the noblest only, but the one life alone possible at all for those who once begin to mount the steep, and will not be persuaded to turn back.

Love is its own end, and seeks no other, no reward. The devotion of life—to give time, and effort, and heart, and thought, and pains, and, if need be, anything and everything to the service of others—this is the end, the true end; there is nothing beyond, nothing higher, or nobler, or better, or more like to God—the only end which justifies a man and glorifies a life. The rich man in the parable lived for himself; that was why he did not notice Lazarus at the gate. He lived for himself. There the facts lay before him, that there were others to live for, others whom he could help, and conscience spoke and echoed what Moses and the Prophets had taught, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and he—he loved his neighbour, probably, just so much as was necessary to gratify his own self-love, and no more; and he saw no more; he didn't even see Lazarus longing for the crumbs. If you would have the spiritual eye which sees the occasion for mercy, your life must be ruled by that spirit of love which is life itself, which finds its satisfaction in the energy of self-devotion, in the life of that Love

which has given us all provision for our needs, of that Love which He is, Who said, "I am the Beginning and the End." His are the principles by which each individual Christian soul is called upon to glorify his life—that, in all the transactions of life, a man make his neighbour's interest his own; that he do so, if need be, at his own cost and loss, and that he find in this the self-satisfying energy of life.

There is nothing here which may not be done in some degree, and in a daily increasing degree, in the economic world and life of to-day. "Love *one another*." It is the work of individual souls towards individual souls. Christ did not demand that the world should be set in order before He came to live in it the Perfect Life. You are not to expect to see the principles of Christ in acknowledged and popular supremacy, before you will walk in His footsteps by Whose Name you are called. You are to live by them, and give yourself to them, glad that, in so doing, you can give yourself to Christ, Who has given Himself to you, so that in you may live the joy of those who give themselves for love. He made the interests, the needs, the aims of suffering humanity His own. He faced the sacrifice. "He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied"—satisfied in love realized and acted out, love lived by

as a stern and searching law, love leading to loss and death and shame, love so offered to the hearts of men, and, by the hearts of men who should be worthy of such love, accepted as the law, treasured as the privilege of life.

V.

THE BLESSING OF LABOUR.

"Consider the lilies of the field, . . . they toil not, neither do they spin."—S. Matt. vi. 28.

It is a wonderful sight for one who lives in less fertile lands to come among the harvest fields of the eastern counties of England, in the midst of harvest-time. A golden land, shining in the glory of the autumn sun. Everywhere the golden grain; here and there a field of waving gold, elsewhere the treasure stored in the long line of golden stack; most often sunburnt, stalwart men, gathering the precious gifts of God, with the sunlight of His blessing on their toil. It is a picture of the blessing of labour. Can it be that labour ever was a curse? How did the words ever come to sound other than a blessing, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread"?

The blessing of labour,

No doubt it may be said of English agricultural

labour, that though its produce glitters in the August sun, its days of golden prosperity are gone, and that the sunburnt labourer, and those for whom he labours, reap for themselves no golden harvest from their work. But let us take the picture, none the less, for the truth that is in it, and see whether it is altogether a paradox to read in it that labour—this labour as it is—that labour always and in itself is a blessing.

1. Is weariness a blessing? Is it not? "Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening," is the culmination of the Psalm of nature—the evening, the time of rest, when power is spent and energy exhausted, when the day's life is lived out to the full, and the hour of repose is come. Labour is a blessing, first of all, because it is the employment of energy. Man is a thing that works, and, without work, is restless and ill at ease. He is full of possibilities, unhappy till, of his own power, he has made something real; full of force, uneasy till it is spent on some device; full of dim dreams, half seen, half felt, of what it may be given him to do, impatient till they take shape in a task set, a work accomplished, and a duty done. Rest after labour is the only rest. Can we conceive a happy life in which the power latent in muscle, nerve, and will, should never be called forth; in

(1) in the full employment of energy;

which obstacle and difficulty should never challenge the reserve of force; in which a man should never know what it is to look back with wonder on the achievement of that to which he set himself in doubt and fear?

This is the treasure of a nation, this stored reserve of faculty, this hidden power waiting to show itself as will directed to an object, revelling in the exercise of strength, resting only when the music sounds upon the ear, "The work is done." Economic science calls it labour, and its motive wages. Who can say how large a proportion of its work every day is done under the stress of some such force as that which the Apostle described when he said, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel," because the power pent up must find its way out into life, because of the sheer joy of work, the delight in the exertion of the energy that stirs and quickens within us, that seeks blindly for some object on which it may spend itself, in gaining which it may have rest? On the face of it, this is a blessing—a blessing to thank God for—that we have known what it is to feel this power moving within us, to feel it at work in the labour of day after day and year after year, to see it embodied in work done, and to thank God, not only for the result, but for the power and its use.

2. And yet, after all, is it not practically true that a man works, not to employ his energies, but to earn his wages? Certainly, it is the second blessing of labour, that the labourer is worthy of his hire. Wages earned are a blessing. It is good that a man enjoys the fruit of his labour, that he holds in his hand the witness that his work is done. It is a part of the gift of power and its use to see and feel it gain its end. This end, among other ends, is a thing towards which it has been directed, to support the life from which it comes. At its lowest, honest labour done for wages' sake is so far blessed in wages earned; but to the man to whom the power and its use are themselves a blessing and a gift, wages also are a gift—earned, and yet a gift, the other half of that double gift which is made up of work and its reward. The work itself, in the doing of it, absorbs all energy and thought, and wages for work done come as an added good; they are a blessing most of all to those to whom work itself is a privilege and a blessing.

(2) in the wages of life;

All work, be it good or evil in its motive and its character, gains in the end its wages and reward—from the selfish desire which gains the reward of death, the wages of sin, up to the labour which works in the spirit of the rule, "Give, and it shall be

given to you." All honest and true workmen know, as a matter of fact and experience, that the earning of wages is a blessing, that good received is doubled where it results from good done or good attempted. It is good for a man to feel that he possesses his own means of life in right of his own labour. Labour that is coldly measured to match a calculated wage, gains only the poor and meagre reward for which it works; but even here the good is done in some measure, and in the same measure good is received. Labour that is given with the full heart of a life that loves to spend itself in work, rises to the fruition of that great reward, which is beyond all earning, and is rightly called a gift, the gift of life.

Is not this the sum and substance of what men desire as wages, of what we think they have a right to ask? The wages of work is life. This is the blessing bestowed by rights upon all who work—they live; they have, as the outcome of their labour, what is worthy to be called a life. This is the standard of comfort to which, by testing it, we have to teach men to rise, that they know what it is to live. Life is not only faculties evoked, energies employed, force exercised to the full, but desires fed with the achievement of the objects of desire, will spent in effort after an ideal of happiness which can satisfy

the will, and a heart moving and yet resting in the peaceful activities of a home, where the love that goes up like a prayer to Heaven is answered by the love that bends like an angel of blessing over the living image of Heaven upon earth.

For this is the last and crowning blessing of labour; it is the instrument and the life of love. Here, at least, in the highest claim for labour, we endow it with no imaginary glory. Men do work for the love of those on whom they may spend the wages of their work—for their wives, for their children, for their home. Labour is the trodden road of love, the means of all the daily sacrifices by which men serve those whom they have learnt to love—even when it is also the unconscious, or even the unwilling, service of those whom they have not yet learnt to love. And in proportion as labour is felt to be by those who work the channel along which those energies find vent, whose stoppage would be death, and is rewarded in wages with a life worthy of the work which earns it, love widens out from wife and child, for whom men work, to fellow-labourers who share the toil, to all with whom the organization of labour brings the worker into living and human relations.

(3) in the living energy of love.

Labour is the way of sacrifice, which makes love a strong and energizing principle, instead of a weak

and enervating sentiment. It is the test of its sincerity and the satisfaction of its true desire. Love may begin as the desire to possess, but, as a living spirit, it is the desire to serve. It finds out its true vocation, it learns the secret of the impulse whose strength, at first, it feels, but does not understand, when this impulse carries it, at the cost of daily self-denial, along the road of daily duty. And the natural course of its development, as it fills the days of men with labours done and pains endured for love, is that it should grow to be an end to itself, no longer satisfied with the sphere which remains its centre and its home, but cannot limit its radiation or restrict the scope of its life. He who loves at home, and works in love for home, finds love to be a life that seeks a wider range, a feeling that is ready to spring forth on every occasion of social contact, a spirit that is ready to enter into the body prepared for it in the very framework of the society of men.

Labour forces love to know itself. The love of home is a test to which a man may bring back his conduct in the wider world, and ask whether it was worthy of the ideal which he would not be content to forsake. And in the wider world, in the more ordinary business relations with men, labour affords a field of fellowship in the common efforts of men

working side by side for common ends, and, still more, opportunities of sacrifice and self-denial, which the true spirit, bred in labour done for love, will recognize if it is awake, will grasp at and use if it is alive, till the man learns to know, in all those with whom he has to do, his brethren in the family of the Everlasting Father; and in labour, even unrepaid, by which their brethren gain, the sons of God, working in the spirit of His love, see of the travail of their souls and are satisfied.

Such is the blessing of labour, as we see and know it may be now lived in and enjoyed. There is no doubt about its reality, however true it may be that the picture we have drawn is an ideal. The reality of the world of labour as it is, affords a far different picture, and one which we cannot look upon too often, and can never look upon without pain. But the ideal, too, is a reality—a living and working reality; it is an ideal which men have before them; it is a life which they know to be the best, and strive in some measure to attain. The blessing of labour is real.

Contrast with this ideal the unlaborious life.

Turn, then, from this ideal to another, to what is also in part an imaginary picture of the blessing of an unlaborious life—of the lives of those of whom it has been said, with an unfortunately contemptuous perversion of the words,

that "they toil not, neither do they spin." There are few things in this world more beautiful than one of the homes of those of whom the words have been lately used. Whether or not we acquiesce in the indictment which is implied, as just, we cannot fail to acknowledge the grace and beauty of what at first seems to be a beautiful, because it is an effortless life. Put aside for a moment all knowledge but that of a child, who knows of no hard world beyond the fence, and walks with a delight which centuries of life inspire, along the walls to which time has given its glory, under the trees which time has made to tower over pleasant parks and meadows, and learns from the gladness of a garden of flowers a joy whose memory will never die. Is not all this a blessing —a blessing because it comes unsought—a sheer, unworked-for gift, the blessing of the enjoyment of unlaborious good? "Consider the lilies of the field, . . . they toil not, neither do they spin."

The life that need not labour cannot be blest, except by sharing the blessing of labour.

And yet if we bring back to the experience and the enjoyment of a child the knowledge and the conscience and the heart of a man, is not such a scene as this, with all there is in it, a very wilderness of death? The walls were raised in beauty with the toil and pain of other days: would those who built them be content that men

should stroll within their shelter or their shade? If there is grace and beauty in all that is about us, it is the grace and beauty given by labour, and by labour for the love of home. And for the flowers, "Consider the lilies of the field, . . . they toil not, neither do they spin." What did He mean, but that they busy themselves with no superfluous and futile anxiety of toil, to secure what is already given to their appointed labour after their kind. The garment of glory which they wear is woven by their own proper power and energy, which is His gift. Their beauty is the work of their labour. The scene is full of forces, slumbering, or still at work, pointing to some further end, longing for a fuller use. Here, not least, "creation groans and travails, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies," "who do not walk worthy of the vocation with which they are called." It is not to be said that many do not use largely, and for good, the resources of life and love with which the labour of past ages has blessed them; but it is to be said that the life of labour affords the test of the degree in which those are to be counted blest, to whom the liberty is left to live an unlaborious life. A life without effort is not the life of Christ, or of those who follow Him.

Labour is the blessing of all lives—the blessing,

first, in the employment of power. What range of power is given to those on whom has descended the inheritance and fruit of the energies of other days! The blessing is to use this inheritance to the full; to employ, to exhaust the faculties and possibilities of work which are dormant in the material, and ready to burst into life in the moral heritage of those the satisfaction of whose needs is provided. What blessing of weariness may be theirs! What a challenge to the soul to live itself out into all this framework of life, to find the new and higher needs, for whose satisfaction the man is predestined to toil who need not work for life. It is as though a man, who had known the joy of strength in a common human frame, should feel his soul suddenly called to animate with superhuman power the nerves of a vastly more highly organized brain, and the sinews of a giant's strength. The vigour and the joy of sheer life may be multiplied a thousand-fold by the efforts of a man's own will and the cravings of his own heart; but upon these the efforts of the wills of others, and the cravings of the hearts that have long ceased to beat, have redoubled the blessing of their gifts.

The wages of labour is life. Contrast the living death of a life of mere enjoyment, spent amid all the resources of wealth, with the life of one who should

see himself repaid in the coin such labour earns for the living use of the opportunities of wealth. Enjoyment earns the wages of death; the powers of enjoyment decay in the using, and leave no new faculty to grow in their place. Labour earns always the infinite increase of life. What would a man be worth, what would he deserve, who should use to the full the faculties and opportunities of a life which begins with needs satisfied to the full? He would be rewarded, in the natural return of wages for work, with new faculties, with new opportunities, only too great to be borne with humility and used in faithful life, but that "with God all things are possible," and "He will with the temptation make a way to escape."

One spirit, and one only, could gain such wages, or could bear to receive them—the spirit of Him Who emptied Himself for the love of men. For amid all the glory of a life in which the resources of wealth should be used in loyal labour, unconstrained but by the spirit of love, there will remain that one gift, which to give to God and to men is the ennobling privilege and consecrating grace of all alike—the gift of self. This is the true spiritual labour, the human prerogative of which no wealth can rob a man, the duty which no riches can make easy, the spirit without which no labour avails to do good. This may be

the saving grace of a life, the very luxuriance of whose opportunities might else be more than man could bear. This is the spirit which turns the curse of labour to a blessing—the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of Christ. And the field of labour, as it is, cries aloud for this spirit to descend upon it, in the living sympathy of those who, by bearing their own share of the burdens of men, have earned the right and the power to lighten the load of the heavy-laden.

VI.

THE PRIVILEGE OF MONOPOLY.

The typical case of monopoly is that of the direction of labour.

THERE are three great factors in economic life. They are present with the obligations that belong to their work, in different degrees and combinations, in the various members of the economic body. Labour is the most universal. The universality of the duty and the blessing of labour has been the subject of the sermon preceding this essay. Labour, in one or more of the senses covered by the full width of its meaning—labour of hand or brain or heart, is the economic function of all men as men. But we should distinguish, for the duties which belong to them, the present labour which earns wages, from the past labour to which is paid in interest the natural fruit and growth of the resources it provides for present labour; and, secondly, in present labour we should distinguish labour proper from the special labour of management and direction.

Labour proper, labour in the ordinary and narrower sense of economic science, needs resources to provide the raw material upon which it works, the tools with which it works, and the wages which anticipate its share of the produce. And labour, in the narrower sense, needs further the management which gives it direction, which conceives its end and plans its method, and is able to obtain command of the resources which are needed for its work.

I wish to deal, in this and the following essay, with some aspects of the duty proper to each of these two latter factors in economic life. Economists differ in their treatment of this part of their subject. Some speak of the profits of capital, grouping under the single name the wages of the labour of management, and the interest on the resources which the power of management enables the master or capitalist to command. Others distinguish the two elements in profits, as earnings of management and interest. For our purpose, the essential thing to observe is that the power of management, the head-work, the brain power, is not only itself at the command of the man who possesses it, but confers upon its possessor the command of resources. He has duties, it may be, as the personal owner of resources, for the loan of which he receives interest. He has duties as a labourer—a brain

labourer, but a labourer still. But both as a brain labourer, and in the command of resources which brain power gives, he has special duties; and these may, I think, be most effectively dealt with in a consideration of the moral aspect of monopoly.

The term "monopoly" has two precise meanings: the sole right to deal in a given commodity conferred by law—a meaning with which we now have little to do, except in regard to the instructive instance of the rights of patentees, and the sole power of dealing in a given commodity, gained in the use or abuse of free competition by an individual or by a body of individuals.

Generalizing from these two instances, we may say that monopoly means any command of wealth, or of resources for its production, which becomes concentrated in the hands of one man, or of a body of men, and enables them to fix a price for it in no way proportioned to what they can afford to take, but only to what the buyer can be induced to give. Or, briefly, it is the command of resources which enables a man to fix his own price.

Before we consider what are the duties attaching to this command of resources, it is necessary to point out that monopoly of one kind or another, more or less in accordance with the above definition, is a fact occurring far more widely than in the two instances noted above

of legal and natural monopoly. It may be said without paradox, and with a very important degree of practical truth, that, as owners of property, we are all monopolists, morally responsible for the command of resources whose market value we, in some degree, contribute to fix at our own will. In a ring, or trade combination, every member of it is plainly a joint monopolist with the rest. In trades unions and labour combinations a strike brings into play the power of a body of monopolists, who claim to fix their own prices in the belief that they command resources which the rest of the world cannot do without. And in the more informal combinations and common agreements, by which bodies of men instinctively agree on the interest or profits they will demand, or on the standard of comfort below which they will not sink, it is by their power as monopolists that they are able to make their own terms. Any considerations, therefore, as to the duties involved in this unique command of resources will be in some degree applicable to all members of the economic body.

There is one kind of systematized monopoly, the most important instance of which should be noted, in the ownership of land. The rent of land is a kind of monopoly price, though it differs from an ordinary monopoly in two important respects. It is a monopoly

price, in so far as it is not a remuneration of any labour of the owner, and is therefore not proportioned to what he can afford to take, but to what the tenant can afford to give. It is unlike other monopolies, because rent is not fixed at the apparently capricious will of an individual, or of a compact body of men acting in concert. It is determined by competition at the maximum which the tenant can afford to pay. It is unlike other monopolies also, in that the ownership of land is an investment, whose returns have so far to be decided on the same ground as those of any other investment. With these qualifications, however, it remains true, that in the enjoyment of so much of his rent as does not remunerate his own superintendence, and so come under the head of earnings of management, and is not interest on capital invested in improvements, a landowner is a monopolist, liable to the duties and responsibilities of the unique command of resources which puts it in his power to demand a price not proportioned to any service done for which it is the return.

The leading instance, however, of monopoly, for a consideration of the duties belonging to it, is found in the case of the manager or director of industry, who, in the old Political Economy, was loosely called a capitalist. The director or manager of labour is a

monopolist in more senses than one. In the first place, he can, to a large extent, command his own price for his own brain-work; to a larger extent in proportion as his mental or moral power is greater or more unique. In the second place, he can demand his price, not only in what is virtually his salary or his wage, but in the command of resources which his ability enables him to secure, it may be, to the loss of other competitors. In the third place, he is able, in his command of resources, to claim a more or less arbitrarily large share of the produce of industry for the remuneration of the service done in the loan of resources. He may, that is, in particular instances, in his own industry, influence the relative amount of the produce which goes to interest and to wages respectively. The exact accuracy of this analysis of the position of the capitalist, or employer of labour, is not material to our present purpose. It is plain that he has an unusually large power, as compared with other members of the economic body who contribute to the production of wealth, in fixing his own remuneration. It is plain, further, that on the principle on which we have said above, that every man who has any command of wealth or of resources for producing it at all is, in some measure, a monopolist—on the principle that the division of produce between the various parties to its

production is the issue of the action of a large number of responsible wills and consciences—the employer of labour has a larger individual responsibility than any one else. It is not denied that the mass of labourers have succeeded in raising the standard of wages; it is not denied that, in the struggle for the division of produce, capital has the advantage over labour of greater mobility, and therefore plays the larger part in determining the division of produce. It cannot be denied that the employer of labour is the person in whom is concentrated the responsibility of wielding this command, this power over the distribution of produce. Clearly, therefore, we shall be safe in considering the duties and responsibilities of the capitalist or employer of labour, as the duties and responsibilities of a monopolist—of a man, that is, who has unique command of resources such as enables him in no small degree to fix his own price. What, then, are the moral principles governing the action of a man who has such a command of mental or material resources, as enables him in any degree to fix his own price?

The privilege is the privilege of self-dependence.

There are few positions of power so great as this,—that a man should be able to calculate that the world—his world, at any rate—cannot get on without him. There are few positions in which self-dependence is so complete, as that

in which a man knows that he may count upon the needs of others to bring his powers and resources into play. The mere consciousness of power breeds confidence and self-dependence. The sense of having great resources at command gives a man a certain strength and self-reliance. But there is a peculiar exaltation in the knowledge that personal power and material resources are not merely ours to use when we will, but that there is a constant demand and desire towards the treasure of which we keep the key. Of all forms of mastery none is so proud as that which is built upon the hearts and lives of men whose desire is toward their brother. Self-dependence is scarcely the name for the confident security of those whose resources, personal or acquired, set them on this pinnacle of power. And yet self-dependence describes the distinctive character of their position. Contrast them with all other kinds of men, and they least of all depend on others for the satisfaction of their needs, for the choice of their vocation, or of the surroundings of their life. They can choose what they shall be and do; they owe no man anything—no debt, no gratitude, no regard of obedience. Centred in themselves are the resources, mental or material, which, because they enable them to command the lives of other men, enable them to command their own. Who can be

surprised that there has appeared in the speculations of socialism some tendency to rebel against the laws, which put any man in a position where he depends so entirely upon himself for conduct, by which the lives of other men are profoundly and widely affected? In this country, at least, the attack is not yet sufficiently threatening to provoke a very serious defence. The defence, when it is made, must resort to the "laws" which produce as their result the position of the capitalist. A glance at these laws will show us the Law by which the man who does occupy such a position must first of all be governed.

1. The holder of a legal monopoly in ancient or modern times can give a very simple answer to the question, what has put him in the position he occupies. The law has done so; and the reason why it has done so is the public advantage. In ancient times monopolies were often given, in fact, to enrich the Government, but the original purpose was, probably, to secure the sale of a pure and sound article, or in some way to serve the general interest in respect to its supply. And the modern monopoly of patent, or copyright, is given because it is considered to be for the public interest, that invention should be encouraged by the security, that the inventor should himself enjoy a special benefit from what his own efforts have produced.

(1) This self-dependence is a gift;

The holder of a natural monopoly will begin to defend his position by a claim to enjoy the fruits of his own efforts, and will then represent the paralysis of effort which would follow on any diminution of the power or wealth, which individual effort may hope to have within its reach. He will go on to show how his position is only attained by the use of his natural capacity to minister to the needs of men, whose needs will not be studied without the motive of the attainment of that reward, which he claims the right to enjoy. In other words, his plea will be the plea of public advantage.

What moral restraint arises out of this justification of a self-dependent position? Surely this: that on the very principle on which the self-dependence of the capitalist is claimed and defended, it is a gift. Not only is it true, in a moral consideration of the position, that a man owes to inheritance and education, and, even in the case of the most strictly self-made man, to the organized society in which he lives, the whole of the power which he wields; not only does he in this way stand face to face with God as the Giver of all that he uses and enjoys—in the living faces of the men of his own day, who make the society that has made him, and in the ghostly faces of men of other days, with the unconscious enjoy-

ment of whose spiritual bequest he is endowed; beyond this, that same society which, through the action of law, gave the old, and still gives the modern monopolies for the public good, assigns to him, by its deliberate adoption of the system which has called him, the capitalist, into being—assigns to him the position which he holds. Oh no; it is the laws of Political Economy that have given him his position! "Law" is a convenient general expression for the general action of the wills of men. It is the general action of the wills of men which puts this man in his place. Law has not given to him, as to the monopolist of older days, or to the patentee of to-day, his power, his rights; but society has given them, by the exercise of that prerogative of allowance which sanctions a larger body of human action than law itself, and whose law-making power is acknowledged in prescription and custom. The holder, therefore, of a natural monopoly occupies a self-dependent position, because society gives him a self-dependent position. His position is a gift—a gift of God he would, no doubt, allow in words; a gift of God, in fact, by the hands and wills of men, it is more material that he should both allow and gravely consider it to be. His position is a gift. He does not, therefore, cease to be self-dependent? By no means. His power is not diminished? Not a

whit. He remains self-dependent. But his self-dependence is a gift; and in the mere fact that this is so, the whole moral complexion of his life is changed. A despot by Divine right—though even he thought his power to be a gift—a despot by Divine right, who should learn and appreciate the fact that he has become a constitutional sovereign, would not have to undergo a more complete change in the estimate of his position than the capitalist who has revelled in a purely self-dependent power, when and if he should realize that his self-dependence and his power are his, indeed, in truth, but are his only by the gift and allowance of the society whose economic life he seems to sway. Even if there were no further moral consequences to be drawn, the mere fact that his life is rooted, not in himself, but in the will of others, would be felt at once, most of all by himself, to alter his whole moral attitude, the estimate of his duty, of his responsibility, of the privileges of his position. It would do so for this one reason—it would give him a duty; not merely the duty under which we all lie, that vague and shadowy obligation which we do not realize by applying it to the special circumstances of our own particular lives, but a duty specific and real, belonging to that very position which seems, at first sight, to fulfil the dream of

passion—power without responsibility. He seemed to be the realization of a moral paradox, a man who was an unsocial thing. With the establishment of the principle that his special character is a creation of society, duty lays its iron hand upon his soul. He may not know yet in what direction it will force him to advance, how far it may bid him recede, whether it will turn him to the right hand or the left; but it has hold of him. He has not *a* duty, but his own duty—the duty which belongs to a man, who, in the exercise of a unique and self-dependent power, can demand his own price and get it.

Others than himself have entered into his life. They will maintain their moral footing. Others have given him his position. To others he must answer for it. His position is a gift; the gift makes him liable to a duty for whose fulfilment he is responsible. Duty brings responsibility—responsibility to God, no doubt. As with the gift, so with the responsibility, it is a cheap acknowledgment, if the responsibility acknowledged to God is not realized in acknowledged responsibility to men.

(2) it is a responsibility;

The holder of a legal monopoly was responsible to the Government who gave it. If the Government gave it for its own gain, and the purpose of social

benefit was violated for which in theory it was given, society asserted its rights, and the wisdom of the Government was shown in the withdrawal of an obnoxious and abused prerogative.

The holder of what is called a natural monopoly is, as we have seen, no less really, though less obviously, the recipient of a gift from society. He is no less really, though it may be not legally, responsible to society for his use of its gift. In extreme cases the misuse of monopoly rights, in the ownership of land, has provoked that social condemnation which is the lowest grade of social punishment. Criminal misuse of any economic position calls into louder utterance that voice of moral judgment, whose whisper, at least, may always be heard by those who, in less degree, abuse their economic rights. In proportion to the self-dependence of the individual is his social responsibility. The more absolute his power, the wider is the range of those who are affected by and have a right to criticize its use, the keener the criticism whose scrutinizing eye scans the details of his economic conduct, the deeper the curse of condemnation which is breathed over a life, whose powers of blessing measure the degradation of the spirit that can neglect them. Upon the conscience and heart of the man who boasts and claims a self-dependent

position, society will rightly fix the stain of a selfishness too deep for words, if he fails to find in his power the reason and motive of those weighty and far-reaching obligations, which no great power has ever disregarded except to its ruin. From his heart and conscience will be demanded the spontaneous flow of the impulse towards that life of beneficence, as wide as the world from which he gains, whose opportunities are patent to all to whom his power is a wonder, to whom its use might be made the manifestation of the glory of God.

Let him shrink from this publicity if he can. Let him close his ears to the voice of public opinion, and decline to submit to the verdict of the public conscience. The social character of his life pursues him into the sanctuary and the solitude of his own soul. It is a solitude in which, because of the myriad ties which link his every act with consequence of good or evil to men, he can never be alone; it is a sanctuary on whose altar, if there do not lie the offering of a life devoted to the good of men, consumed by the fire whose intensity is in proportion to the purity and activity of his human good will, there shall smoulder devoted and accursed, in the slow flames of a suppressed remorse, a heart that strives in vain to be so cold and dead as not to know that the power which is

not power for good is the power of the worm that cannot die. In the court of his own conscience and heart there are gathered the ghostly multitudes of those whose living bodily needs, in that real world without, he feeds or disregards, to cry, with mute faces of pain, their silent accusation of him before his own soul, or to reflect, in the gladness of those who have received the gift of love, the blessed sentence of the judge who sits enthroned in the chosen sanctuary of the Eternal Love, "Well done, good and faithful servant." If it be so, he has entered already into the joy of his Lord. If he has learnt that his power is a gift, and that the gift is a responsibility from which he cannot escape, he has learnt more.

Power, subject to duty and responsibility, may seem to be precluded from the pleasure which belongs to power. The pleasure of power is the pleasure of freedom, and duty and responsibility bring restraint. The self-dependent man revels in being able to do as he likes. Duty marks him out a narrow road, and warns him from straying to the right or to the left. Responsibility realizes the restraint of duty, where conscience coincides in and re-echoes the reproof of public judgment. But with the enforcement of the duty comes the appreciation of the privilege of help. The pleasure of self-dependence is

(3) above all, it is a privilege.

in power—but in power to do what? The pleasure of caprice is evanescent. Mere power ceases to be pleasant, unless it has a definite direction towards the definite attainment of an end, habitually chosen and deliberately taken as the object of desire. Power finds limits to its exercise in every direction but one. All the pleasures of self-aggrandizement in self-indulgence or in pride create a craving which grows greater, and is satisfied less, as life goes on. Pleasure in the exercise of power is, while it lasts, better and higher than pleasure in the gratification of desire. But power does not rise to the level of privilege, cannot be appreciated as a gift or realized as a responsibility, until it sets itself an end, partial failure in whose attainment is the root, not of disappointment, but of humility and hope; where "life succeeds, in that it seems to fail;" and human power loses itself, as it is absorbed in the pursuit of the purposes of the age-long work of that eternal power, of which it is born, to which it has bowed itself in the acceptance of a law, by which it is blessed with the privilege of the life, that blesses those that give and those that take. The freedom of self-dependence is not lost. Freedom is of the essence of privilege. Privilege is a freedom which is a gift; it is no imagined creation of wilful caprice and unrestrained

desire; it is born amid the blessings of dependence, and nurtured in the obedience of love. Its freedom is not in licence, but in the liberty of a law which has become the life of the soul, the heart and spirit of its high desire. And this law is the law of help and love, a law whose restraint is chosen and its obedience willing, a love which moves along the lines of the impulse which is the privilege of souls to whom the promise is fulfilled, "I will set My law in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

There are many lives in which this spirit is at work, which takes all the powers and opportunities of life as God's gift, to be used subject to His law, that men may learn in them the supreme privilege of help. Such men never fail of the exercise of their privilege, for want of opportunities adequate to the manifestation of its glory and its blessing. Yet they are hampered by limitations of power, haunted by visions of infinite usefulness, far beyond the instruments and occasions with which it has pleased God to allow men to bless them. What would not such men give to have the use but for a day of the powers and opportunities—powers wasted and spent in works of evil, opportunities that lie idle along the path of dull and heartless lives—of those who might realize and enjoy a privilege beyond all

dreams? It may be a visionary hope, it may be a vicious imagination, that society should find means to enforce upon those who neglect this privilege the performance of the duties, which, to the world's loss and their own, they blindly or wilfully neglect. But suppose for a moment that it could come true—that some law could be enacted which, without sapping the roots of freedom, or robbing helpful lives of the felicity of choice, could exercise a pressure so gentle and so sure, or hold up an ideal of such a winning and cogent fascination, that the man on whom these are bestowed as a gift, and laid as a burden of duty, should be forced and drawn, in every detail of life, into the full and willing exercise of the privilege that they convey. It is no imagination. The law is an eternal truth, its enactment is a present fact. The law of love and help is from everlasting; it wells out of the very heart of God, from the day when, out of the infinite resources of His power and His love, His wisdom made the worlds. It is written on the open arms of the Cross, where He hung, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be equal with God, but poured forth His soul in service and suffering for the love of men. It is stamped upon the heart and conscience of man, made in the image of the Eternal Love, consecrated to the fellowship of the

service of Christ and the sacrifice of the Cross. It is the everlasting hope, the resource that never fails the hearts and wills of those, who have learnt, in the knowledge of God in Christ, that the privilege of infinite power is the privilege of help.

VII.

THE PRODUCE OF THE PAST.

In investments we look for (1) security, (2) high interest. We ought to look for (1) a good object, (2) just interest.

If a man wishes to provide for himself, or for those for whom he cares, a certain means of subsistence, he finds a safe investment, *i.e.* he provides resources for the production of some commodity, on the constant need of which he may securely count. All labour for the satisfaction of any need requires, besides the mere labour itself, and the mind and will that direct it, a certain command of resources, of the results of past labour. The powers of mind and will which direct and manage labour are not within the gift of man. These command the direction in which resources already provided by labour shall be applied. But the resources themselves are, in any case, sure to be required. They may be gained in greater or less amount by any labour, and once gained, they are a certain source of further gain. It is with the duties

incident to the possession of resources, the fruit of past labour needed for present labour, that we have now to do.

Money which can be, or is invested, is the symbol of these resources. A very large proportion of the community live on money so invested—live, that is, on the payment received for resources provided by past for present labour. Most of those who so live, and rejoice in the security of the means of subsistence given to them by the possession of the resources which present labour always needs, are guided as to the destination of the funds at their command by two considerations only. They ask what investments are safe; they ask what investments pay the highest interest; they look, that is to say, to the quality and to the quantity of the return they are to obtain.

It is to this large class in the community that we have to propose another question. What ought you to obtain in return for the resources you provide? As to quality, we shall have to ask them not only to look to the security that the industry they assist will continue to give them the means of subsistence, but to ask further, whether the industry be of such a kind that it deserves return at all. As to quantity, we shall ask them to consider what amount

of the produce of labour is fairly due to those who provide the resources needed for labour. Is the use to which they put their resources good? Is the amount they gain from them just? And in order to answer these two questions, we have first to ask another, Why have they a right to a share in the produce of labour at all?

1. All labour needs certain resources to start with. These resources may be either provided by nature, unassisted by human effort, or they may be the result of human labour. It seems clear that, in so far as they are provided by nature, they should be open to all; and that, in so far as they are the result of human labour, they are rightly at the disposal of the individual will, and for the satisfaction of individual desire. The labour, that is, that has provided them, should in this case be paid like other human labour.

(1) The reasons why you are entitled to interest at all,

Of these two principles, I am content to leave the first—that resources, in so far as they are natural, should be open to all—without justification. The second, that resources, in so far as they are the result of human labour, should be paid for, needs some justification. The labour that produced them has, in the natural course of events, been paid once; why should it be paid any more? The answer to this

question seems to be, that human labour, like the labour of nature, is infinitely productive. The question of the right of those who provide the resources of labour to anything more than the repayment of what they provide, has sometimes been treated as though the circumstances out of which it arose were merely those of greater or less physical capacity and moral effort. But even in an ideally perfect moral community, where all the members of the economic body laboured, so as to have, not only something to live on, but something to save, there would still be room for the remuneration of past labour as past.

If we suppose the individual man to turn to account, as material for his present labour, the produce of his past labour, it will plainly be the case that the amount of produce which he gains as the result of his labour in one year, will make his labour in the next year more productive than it would otherwise have been. His labour of last year, already paid in produce, will go on being paid this year, in the increased produce which will reward this year's labour, because it has at its command the result of last year's labour. And, quite apart from the irregularities produced by the varieties of energy and sloth, of thrift and self-indulgence, there will be room for the exchange, between one and

another of the ideal members of the moral economic system, of the produce of their labour in the past, with the possibilities which present labour may realize from it, no less than of the produce of their present labour itself.

Past labour, then, no less than present labour, deserves its reward. It should be paid in proportion to its relative value in comparison with present labour, just as different kinds of present labour should be paid in proportion to their relative value, determined by their comparison one with another.

This account of the matter, however, leaves two important questions to be determined. First, in the provision of resources for the labour of to-day, how much is to be credited to nature, and received as a gift; how much is to be paid for as the produce of the labour of the past? And, secondly, how is past labour to be weighed against present labour? How are we to know what proportion of the produce of present labour is to go in wages for this labour itself, and what proportion is to reward the past labour that provides the resources which present labour needs?

As to the first question, how far the resources now afforded to the labour of to-day are to be taken as the gift of nature, and how far they are to be

credited to the labour of the past, the obvious remark to be made is, that any formal distinction is impossible. Natural resources do not become available as the subject of human labour at all, until such amount, at least, of human labour is spent upon them as is involved in the selection of this kind of matter, or this kind of ground, rather than another. And from the first moment of selection, appropriation, and enclosure, natural gift and human labour become inextricably fused. To labour only does nature render up her gifts. Only with the gifts of nature does labour become productive, or exist at all. There is no formal distinction possible, between the amount and kind of resources which are the gift of nature and those which are the result of the labour of men. The only practical inference which can be drawn from the double source of the material labour of to-day, is the twofold inference that the labour of the past should continue to be rewarded out of the labour of the present, and that the labour of the present should never be actually or virtually denied access to what is in part the produce of past labour, but in part also the gift of nature.

As to the relative value, again, of the labour of the present, and of that labour of the past which provides it with its necessary material and resources, no formal

definition can be made. It is plain that as the relative value of the produce of different kinds of present labour will vary from time to time, on any and every theory of the nature of value, so will the relative value of past and present labour.

It would seem, then, that the right of the man who provides resources for labour to a share in its produce is identical with the right of labour to its wage; but that it is a general character of this right, that it must be measured, not by any formal law, but by the agreement of the conscience and judgment of those who are parties to the exchange. If this be true at all, it is impossible to insist upon it too strongly. If it is denied, it will be denied upon one of two grounds. The claims of past labour may be denied; but this will be only on the principle which denies to present labour its future wage. Or it may be affirmed that the relative share of past and present labour is to be determined by the relative need of each member in the exchange, by the need of the past labourer to reap the continued fruit of his labour, and of the present labourer to have the resources which enable him to exercise his powers. But this latter objection only attempts to state in non-moral terms the moral fact of the interdependence one on another of the labour of the past and of the

present. If each needs the other, each is responsible to and for the other—each to each for their common use of the resources of social life, each for each to God, Who has made each his brother's keeper.

These, then, are the considerations to which we must look, if we would determine what is right as to drawing income from investments. You are entitled to an income at all on precisely the same grounds that a labourer is entitled to his wages, viz., that you do, or help to do good work. You are entitled to this or that amount as the amount which conscience—yours and that of the other party to the contract—assigns to you, as your just share of the produce of the present labour which, in virtue of your ownership of the rights of past labour, you are able to assist.

(2) show that you are bound to see that the source from which you draw it is good,

2. As to the character of the work from whose profits we draw interest, where the business is one which plainly panders to vice, or lives by the oppression of labour, the right and wrong of the matter is beyond question. Few are willing to live avowedly on a share in the proceeds of vice or oppression. The question is, how far will the principle carry us which is involved in this reluctance? What of a business which panders, not to vice, but to low and degraded tastes? What of a business which is ready to meet any tastes, whether

they be low and degraded or not? What of house property, where, if the rents are not the proceeds of overcrowding in unsanitary dwellings, they are the price paid for an ill-built and comfortless tenement? You would not take shares in a company of sweating tailors. What of the industry from whose produce you do receive your income? Is it justly paid? If you refuse to live on the proceeds of actual vice and oppression, does not this mean that you acknowledge an obligation to live only on the proceeds of work that does good and is good? Does not this mean an obligation to know whether the work on whose proceeds you live is good or not, to discern between good and better, and to choose the best? The idea of such an obligation seems strange. There are many investments to which it would appear to be inapplicable. And there is no machinery for applying it to the rest, and for ascertaining, not merely whether an investment pays well and is safe, but whether the production which is safe to pay is a production of good, and a production by good methods.

The idea of an obligation to discern between morally good and bad investments would seem inapplicable, for instance, to Government stocks. The fact that it would seem so is worth considering in itself, even though here the obligations of the drawer

of interest differ only in principle from those of the citizen. Each is bound to see that, so far as in him lies, the life of the State is governed by the aim at good ends, and carried on by honest methods; the one, because, as a member of the State, he bears his share of the responsibility for the public acts of the body to which he belongs; the other, because he takes pay from the nation for helping in what is done. But this latter obligation deserves attention for its own sake. English investors have helped by their loans, and been paid by interest for helping, other Governments than their own. It will be allowed to be open to question whether, by so doing, they have not helped to keep standing what had better have been allowed to fall; whether their income has not been drawn from methods of government and taxation which, if they had known them, might have disturbed their rest. Investments in the Funds are the taking on of debt originally incurred for specific purposes—as, for instance, for the wars of the last two centuries—in which we cannot be considered to take on the responsibility. But the general purpose which covered all of these is the maintenance of the national life; and when we draw interest on loans to our own Government, we do incur a fresh responsibility for the methods by which now, as a matter of fact, the

nation pays its way. The national life is, in one aspect of it, a commercial concern, and the man who takes pay for assisting in the processes by which it is carried on, has a moral interest in the end at which from time to time it aims, in the justice of the wages it pays, in the general moral character of the methods by which its ends are pursued. There are a vast number of quiet and ignorant people, who may invest their money in the Funds in a general faith that to help the Government is an honourable and praiseworthy employment of wealth. It becomes, then, an additional duty for ordinary citizens to see that Government work is done in accordance with principles which, if the investor were brought face to face with them, he ought to approve.

But if it seems absurd to suppose that the ordinary man should concern himself with this responsibility, it seems even more paradoxical to say that such an obligation can be regarded in other investments. It seems paradoxical, not so much because the obligation to draw profit from work that serves a good end by worthy means is in itself in any way absurd, but because the fulfilment of the obligation seems to be absolutely impossible. We shall come across a similar difficulty in dealing with the moral question as to buying cheap goods.

The answer to the difficulty I believe to be, that we do not see how to ascertain whether any commercial concern, to which we may contribute the support of a loan, is a business whose end and methods we can approve, because we do not want to ascertain it. I plead that a man is bound, if he takes part of the profits of a business, to know, not only that the business is safe to pay, but that it deserves to pay. The answer amounts to this: No one thinks of asking as to an investment any other questions than, "Is it safe?" and "How much interest does it pay?" The obligation is not cancelled by an assertion that no one regards it, and the difficulty of fulfilling it is at once amply accounted for and removed. If people want to know whether the business by which they profit is good or not, and will not invest in it until they do know, it will become the interest of the managers of the business to let them know. In the progress towards the fulfilment of any unfulfilled duty, towards the attainment of any unattained ideal, the steps are taken by individual consciences and wills—consciences which refuse to be blinded, and wills which refuse to be baffled, by difficulties such as only challenge the force of the will to carry through into practice principles, whose intrinsic truth and absolute obligation no difficulties can affect.

3. What rate of interest ought you to expect and receive, given that you have ascertained that you are to receive it from a worthy source? What ought to be your payment for providing the resources needed for productive work? This is primarily a question for the direct employer of labour. But the employer of labour has to hire resources, as well as to hire labourers, and in his personal judgment the demands of the holders of resources contend with the demands of labourers for their share of the produce. As to this contest there are two remarks to be made.

(3) and that the return you get for it is such as is justly your due.

(1) It is broadly true to say that it is a contest between those who demand the means of subsistence, on the one side, and those who demand the means of more comfortable subsistence on the other. This fact is morally significant in itself, and affects the question how far it is right to swell the pressure of a demand for high interest. But its moral significance is increased when we realize that the demand of capital for employment—partly because it is more easily transferred, partly, for this very reason, that it can wait for what it demands—has the advantage in the struggle over the demand of labour for the employment on which the labourer lives. And this advantage is derived from the command by the individual

of resources which are in large measure the result of the past labour, not of the individual, but of the society. Their fruitfulness is the best gift of the ages of labour that are gone by. It is a gift of the past to the present, transmitted through individual hands which can claim payment for the gift, but in truth a common heritage, due to the growth of faculties and the organization of industrial society. This suggests what should be the ruling spirit of the economic action of those, who do hold as individual possessions any part of the produce of past labour, such as present labour has need to buy. This spirit is the spirit of gift to need. He who has received a gift, and lives on a gift, owes a gift.

We have said that there is an obligation to invest only in industries whose products and methods are good in themselves. Is there not also an obligation to choose for investment those industries which need help most, even if they cannot pay the highest price for it, and to make a gift of the denial of increased luxury or comfort which is involved in the choice? Is there not an obligation to aid the maintenance of a standard of luxury in those who live at ease, such as shall allow for the growth of the standard of true comfort in those who live by labour, paid out of

what is left from the satisfaction of the demands of ease?

(2) This remark applies to all, or nearly all, who live on the interest of investments. There is another remark to be made concerning those to whom it is open to raise the question, How long shall I go on building up further gains out of the payment I can get for lending the resources which represent what I have already gained? There is no doubt that the duty does not diminish, but increase, with the increase of wealth, to use wealth productively. But there is surely doubt whether the desire for more should be allowed, in the case of those who have more than enough, to maintain a competition for the largest share it can get in the purchase of labour, either with the labourers to whom accumulated resources help to give employment, or with holders of resources whose need is greater. Might not those who hold resources at their command in such quantity as this, consider whether some of the many doubtful enterprises or unremunerative tasks, which cry aloud to be undertaken for the good of the community, do not lie within the sphere of absolute obligation for them? The poor we have always with us. There will never fail to be sin enough to breed weakness and want; but the position of the very rich, if every increase of their riches is to

be the means of further increase, is, to say the least of it, a moral paradox. If giving is not to be the ruling spirit of their lives, it will be hard to assign any meaning at all to the saying, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

VIII.

WEALTH.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."
S. MATT. vi. 19.

What is the true, the incorruptible wealth?

THE Law of Christ is prone to disguise, though the disguise is always such as to provoke inquiry. One form which is taken by truth in this tendency to disguise is parable. Another, is that taken by the truth in the text—negation. Behind the negation, as behind the picture of the parable, lurks the truth to be expressed.

The truth to be expressed here is the Law of God as to wealth; and the Christian principle as to wealth is taught first by a negative. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Not upon earth? Where else? Treasure surely belongs to earth. Not where moth and rust corrupt? What should treasure be but corruptible? It is an earthly thing, of course; it has to do with earthly things—with prudence, and

comfort, and ease, and all the things of this world which pass away. Treasure in heaven? Wealth in heaven? What have treasure or wealth to do with heaven? These banks, and shops, and warehouses, and docks—what have they to do with heaven? What would your friend say when you met him to-morrow morning, hurrying along the pavement with his rapid business walk, if you gravely dropped a word hinting at some distant connection between wealth and heaven? He might be inclined to say that, as to laying up treasure in heaven, he had been about that sort of business to-day, and that, at any rate, his week-day business was to lay up treasure on earth. And yet our Lord's command is not "Lay up treasures on earth for six days in the week as much as you like, provided you lay up treasures in heaven on the seventh day;" it is, "Lay *not* up treasures on earth." And it is the truth contained in these forbidding words with which we have to deal.

If the latter part of the sentence stood by itself, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," we might mistake it for a mere metaphorical expression; but as it is, the two parts, the prohibition and the command, plainly refer to the same subject-matter; they describe alternate ways of dealing with the

same thing. They refer to wealth; they command the making of wealth an object, but with a difference —in heaven. So that this saying of our Lord, so far from establishing a distinction between earthly and heavenly concerns, cancels and obliterates that distinction.

"Wealth in heaven." These hurrying crowds that will course in interlacing lines down these streets to-morrow under the shadow of the dome, are every one of them trying to lay up treasures, to lay up wealth—in heaven or not? Every soul in this cathedral[1] is laying up wealth, or living on wealth laid up—in heaven or not?

Wealth is an object. We are commanded to pursue it; we are commanded to "lay up treasures." Nay, we are commanded by the instincts of our nature, responding to the necessities of life. The desire, the instinct to seek for wealth is universal; it produces results more wonderful, more amazing than almost anything else in God's wonderful world. We have gathered together this year,[2] for show, away west from here, some of the various products of the desire for wealth—the things that men treasure—from all parts of our empire. We walk through that exhi-

[1] Preached at S. Paul's Cathedral.

[2] The year of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition.

bition with wonder. But what is this, the wonder of the eye, to the far greater wonder of the vast and intricate system of modern industry and trade? Think of it—its vastness, world-wide, its intricate complexity, its rapid movements, its tremendous result. All of it is animated by one motive—the desire to lay up wealth, to lay up treasure—in heaven or not? What is the character of our desire for wealth as a nation, or as individuals? We know when trade is depressed. Do we ask if it is degraded? We know when industry is unemployed. Do we see when it is perverted? If we asked these questions, we might find the answer better, as well as worse, than we expect. But the question I want you to answer is, What is the character of the desire for wealth which our Lord commands? Not on earth, He says, but in heaven—and to explain and give the reason for this—not corruptible, but incorruptible.

1. What is wealth—the wealth we seek, the wealth we desire? The first and most obvious answer is, money. And money is not especially corruptible. Among the qualities which recommend the precious metals as standards of value and means of exchange, one is their durability. And yet our Lord's words claim these metals, like all earthly things, as subject to

1. Money? This is the type of wealth liable to decay, as "the transience of a condition of utility."

the law of decay. The process of decay is slow; but time is long, and it is in the view of eternity that *He* is testing the value of wealth. But, in fact, in any true view of value, mere money, if you take that for wealth, is dead long before its lustre is dimmed, or its substance corroded by the process of decay. Decay, when we speak of material wealth, is *the transience of a condition of utility.* The elements of the decayed thing remain after its decay, but no longer in a shape to fulfil the purpose which gave them value; and money, mere money, is in itself already a dead and useless thing. Its life is in exchange. Except as a means of exchanging the good we can do, which it repays, for the good we can gain, with which it repays it—it is useless. We desire money for the sake of what it will bring to us. It is a convenient and portable shape in which to transfer from hand to hand the fruit of labour, the right to demand the necessaries and the pleasures of life. As a matter of fact, in that vast system of exchange of which we spoke just now, actual coined money fills a very small place compared with paper symbols, which are more obviously mere tokens of what money will buy.

And the miser, the only man who acts as though mere money were wealth, who delights in the mere possession of money, whether it be coined metal or

any other symbol of wealth—the miser, who takes the symbol for the reality, is regarded as a fool. And yet it is worth while pausing at this first example of the breach of the Divine law, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt." He is a fool; he gloats over his money, and never gets his money's worth. Its mere possession is his pleasure—the knowledge that he has it. It is a means to an end —to a thousand ends; and he treats it as though it were an end in itself, and gloats over it, and never uses it. There it lies before him, the possibility of every kind of use and enjoyment; but he does not use it; he likes to possess it. The money, the source of his pleasure, will last his time, as a material substance that keeps its shape. Decay cannot rob him of it. No; but decay has passed from it to him, and the corruption of his own mind and heart has already coloured, with a more deadly corruption than any mere physical decay, the utmost possibilities of wealth that reside in what he treasures. It is well to pause before him as an example; for we see him to be a fool, and he is no bad picture of those of whom we shall speak as we go on, who repeat and exaggerate his folly and his sin. The man who gloats over his money and does not use it, is a fool. But there are

more fatal fools than he. The man who gloats over the things that money buys—over food, and fine clothes, and ease, and leisure—and does not use them; the man who gloats over life, the life which these things feed and cherish, and does not use it; the man who misuses life and the means of life alike, and penetrates them with the corrupting influence of a selfish, loveless soul,—of all these the miser is a type.

2. But let us look at their answer to the question, What is wealth? It is the answer we should most of us give. Wealth is the abundance of the means of life and enjoyment. It is for the sake of these that we desire money; it is these that we wish to provide. We prize money, most of us, as a means of exchange. Houses, and clothes, and food, and furniture, and pleasures; pictures, perhaps, and books, and the power to travel,—these, and such as these, with money in the background to provide more of them, are the things that make up the wealth we desire. The power to marry, the power to educate our children, and start them in the world, and put them in the way of attaining the same standard of ease and enjoyment as ourselves—these are the treasures we lay up. Are these treasures upon earth; are these such as moth and rust will corrupt? Such of them as are

2. Abundance of the means of life? Life is liable to decay, as "the gradual substitution of a lower for a higher form of life."

material, we may think, will last our time, like the miser's gold. But even these are relative to the power of enjoyment. Taste, and hearing, and sight, and less material powers of enjoyment than these, decay as life goes on, decay as life decays. And some part of our idea of wealth is already more than material; it is personal. It is of the kind of which we speak in the Litany, when we say, "In all time of our wealth, good Lord deliver us." Wealth—the wealth we desire—includes a state of mind and body and soul; it includes all sorts of faculties and endowments, the gifts of nature, or the result of education and experience. As surely as money is of value only for the sake of the means of life and enjoyment which it will provide, so surely are these means of life and enjoyment themselves only of value for the sake of the life to which they minister. Life: wealth is a life—fed, it is true, by material things, supported and surrounded by food and furniture of all the kinds of which we spoke—food and furniture, animate and inanimate; food and furniture for the body and the mind; but the life itself resides in a person, to whose pleasure all these things minister only if he has powers to enjoy them. Who has not had cause to regret in later life, when some means of enjoyment lay before him, that a defective education had made them use-

less for want of the power to enjoy? Who does not know that one of the most difficult parts of the problem of relieving the poverty of the poor, is how to give them the power to rise to the enjoyment of better things? Who does not see of himself, that most of the enjoyments he treasures are due to his possession of certain faculties, which form part of the original endowment of nature, or which early training and education have developed?

Well, then, it is in the satisfaction and employment of these faculties and powers of enjoyment that wealth consists. And it is of these—the faculties and powers of enjoyment to which material wealth ministers—that we must ask, are they corruptible? Are they not? Moth and rust will not corrupt the comfortable income which provides for the satisfaction of our needs, though that, too, is liable to accident and loss. But, as with the miser gloating over his gold, the golden coin will not decay so soon as the fingers in whose clutch it lies, so with us and our wealth—we need not wait till the body is laid cold and stiff, and the soul has fled away, to see that our powers of enjoyment are corruptible. Where are the opportunities of youth, the glory of its promise, the power of its hope? Where is the life that we felt within us then—all that we had it in us

to do? Where are those splendid possibilities which were a part of ourselves then? They are gone—far, far down the wind. It is not only that opportunities were wasted, and that the faculties we did not feed faded away; it is not even that, as life went on, we were bound to narrow down the scope of our ambition and our activity. It is that life dies in the using, its vigour fades, its range contracts; day by day it is less vivid and intense. At best, with the faculties we use and develop there is a process of decay, steady, slow, progressive, aiming at the grave, *that gradual substitution of a lower for a higher form of life,* which, when we speak of living things, is the nature of decay. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," for earthly powers of enjoyment, of work, of thought, of feeling, of life itself, are all subject to decay.

3. We rebel against this doom of death. There is something in us, there is something even in our aim at wealth, that can meet it with defiance. A man provides for those that live with him, for those he loves, for those that come after him, for his wife, for his child. They, too, may die; but there is one thing that does not die, that is careless of death, that lives through death, and in spite of it, and that is his love.

3. Love. This alone is not subject to corruption, except in "the disappearance of the opportunities of love" unused.

It is true. At last we have reached "treasure in heaven," what neither moth, nor rust, nor any other power of death can corrupt, if it be true to itself. As money is good for the means of life which we get by it, and the means of life are good for the life which they support, so life itself is good for the love that lives in it, and that is not subject to corruption or decay. Life is a means to love; and wealth—the true wealth, the only true well-being of the soul and body of man—is love. And all other wealth—money, and houses, and lands, and pleasures, and enjoyments, and faculties of body and sense and intellect—all are wealth, true wealth, "treasure in heaven," if they are absorbed in love, dedicated to love, and used by love.

It is not a far-away and unpractical doctrine. What is the wealth, the well-being of a nation? Is it not in the life they live with one another? Is it not in a great system of mutual help, putting in the reach of every man that is born within its bounds a life in which, because his labour shall contribute to the good of all, all the whole world about him shall in turn contribute to form, to guard, to gladden his home?

As it is, look at your life, the food you eat, the clothes you wear, the house you live in, the work you do, the pleasures you enjoy: all of these come to you

by the help of others, in return for what you do for them, or what you or others have done for them. And the wealth of a nation is that this interchange should be willing, ready, just, complete, between the members of a nation, and between them and all the world; and that in this vast system of a mutual help all should find their happiness and their place; and that in it, as in a body, should live and work the soul that really belongs to it, the spirit of mutual good-will. Wealth is the actual realized existence of this interchange of good.

It is not a far-away and unpractical doctrine. It is plain, everyday matter of fact. Your wealth, whatever it may be, little or great—the wealth you make, the wealth you spend—is treasure, corruptible or incorruptible, treasure on earth or treasure in heaven, according as it is or is not, in the making and the spending, the instrument of love. The transaction across the counter by which you gain your money, is every bit as much the concern of love as the bestowal of it on your wife or your child. You can't borrow money in hell to spend in heaven. Would you feed your child on crime? The sternest law of love applies to the making of money. God has set you in the world with other men to learn, by mutual interchange of the means of life, the laws of love; to

multiply by love, to multiply, as we do multiply, by working for one another, the means of life; and every transaction between you and your neighbour should be for the good of both, otherwise you are multiplying corruption, you are linking yourself to the kingdoms of corruption, and it will avail you little that the pure flower of loving lives draws life in part and unknowing from the corruption that you breed.

In the making and in the spending, wealth is the instrument of love. We are all familiar nowadays with the picture of the poor working man, who, when he has received his wages, is tempted half-way home to the public-house, and drinks while his wife and children starve. A terrible picture, and a true one in many cases, as we see and know; a terrible picture, and a true one of you, if you spend on selfish pleasures what might at least be spent on pleasures social, and shared with those you love. Are there no thin, pale souls about *you*, whose very faculties of enjoyment are starved, in reach of your help, while yours are glutted, sated, dulled? How many of us neglect and ignore the vast gifts of love we might bestow, by caring for the better education of those who depend upon us, or might depend upon us, multiplying not only their powers of enjoyment, but all the faculties and energies of useful and loving life!

And your wealth, meanwhile, goes, evaporates in little trifling self-indulgences, scarcely substantial enough to seem subject to decay; but the heart decays, and the conscience—the power to feel your degradation, the power to sympathize, the power to love.

Decay—it is its last and most terrible feature—decay, when we speak of spiritual beings, is *the disappearance of the opportunities of love.* They pass away as a dying man feels his senses fail him as he dies, and the faces of his friends fade, and the power to lift a hand to touch them is gone, and the light grows dull in the eye, and he is cut off—alone. The opportunities of love pass away. Does love itself remain? Has it used them and grown strong, or has the soul lived a selfish life, laying up for itself "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt"?

Is it corruptible wealth, or incorruptible, that you desire—wealth to feed love, or wealth to feed selfish pride and display, selfish ease and indulgence? It is right to desire wealth, it is wrong to be content without it—true wealth, openly, fairly, and justly gained by true work; true wealth to be spent on the purposes of love. The man who goes on piling up wealth upon wealth, more than he can manage and use for the good of society, who desires, senselessly, what will not help

life or increase enjoyment, what he will never use for his own good or the good of others, in constant, aimless discontent, is both selfish and a fool; but that man is no less selfish and a fool who is content with small means to low ends, whose ambition is not widened by the desire to help to a higher and happier life those who depend upon him, who is content, without the aspirations which employ the energies of love.

What will *you* be the better for the wealth that has been given to *you* when you pass away from these material things, when you pass away from the occasions and opportunities of love? What will you leave behind to those for whom it is your duty or your privilege to provide? The means of life, if you may; but, with them or without them, if you have not these to leave, the memories and the legacy of love. There was One that left to the world, and to every soul in it, the greatest treasure that the world has ever known, Who, while He lived, had not where to lay His Head. There is One that looks down on you, for Whom your soul, be it old or young, fresh or worn with life, innocent or old in selfish, worldly sin, has a value far, far above all earthly treasures. Give to Him your wealth, be it little or great, your labour, your life, your powers, your soul, yourself. Give them to Him,

that is, let Him possess them and fill them with the spirit of His love, that you may shine through and through all your life with the light of His presence and His possession, and transmit the radiance of His love, and be His in the day when He makes up His jewels.

IX.

THE ECONOMIC BODY.

"From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—EPH. iv. 16.

That Christian life is corporate life, is the teaching of S. Paul.

A CHRISTIAN life is a new life—new in contrast to the human life that is not Christian; new, again, at every step by which we put on Christ. What, then, is the character of this new life? what is its impress, its mark upon the soul, upon the relations of men? S. Paul gives many answers. That which he gives most often may be expressed by saying that the Christian life, the new life, is—to sum up in one word his view of human duty and the grace of God—a corporate life. He recurs over and over again to the metaphor of the body.

A recently popular book has illustrated, from the conquests of modern science, the lessons which may be drawn from a study of organic life. But the plain

spiritual and moral meaning of the metaphor of the body, may, perhaps, be still best found in a study of the writings of S. Paul. The metaphor of the body, the description of the spiritual life by its comparison to organic life, may be followed through all the more important of the Epistles. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians it comes, first, in connection with the Sacraments, the means of Christian life—"We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one Bread;" and, again, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body." By the gift of the Spirit, and by the indwelling of Christ, we are drawn closer to one another, and to all who, through whatever means, live by any measure of the grace of Christ, in a common or corporate life. And then, from the diversity of operation of the different members of the same body, is drawn the lesson of the mutual interdependence between the members of the Christian Body, and of the duty of mutual consideration, care, and sympathy. Again, in the Epistle to the Romans, the same doctrine of our membership one of another in the Body of Christ is made the root-principle of all Christian duty, at the beginning of that moral summary which

concludes the great Epistle. Pass on to the Epistles of the first imprisonment, and the same metaphor appears, with another side of its meaning expanded and put forth. Christ is "the Head of all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It is as members of His Body that we receive His grace. He "reconciles" Jew and Gentile "unto God in one Body by the Cross." "There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all;" and "to every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And the purpose of the gifts of grace—and here comes in another lesson from the metaphor—is mutual help—that "speaking the truth in love," we "may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from Whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love." And the Epistle to the Colossians here, as elsewhere, treats of the same subject, only in the different tone which belongs to the special aim of the Epistle.

Here, then, under the metaphor of the different

relations of the members of a body to one another, and to the head, is a description of the general character of the Christian life, of the new life—that we are members of a Body. And this general character may be summed up in three laws—

1. That each member of the Body is a part, dependent on the rest.

2. That each receives life from the Head.

3. That each lives for the good of the whole Body, to help others.

This is the general character, these are the laws laid down as belonging to the highest society, the Christian Church, whose object is to renew the image of God in man. They have their bearing on the relationship between the members of a Church, between those who hold "the Faith once delivered to the Saints," in any particular nation, or country, or place. But we shall not see what their full meaning is, unless we follow them out into other relationships as well. As the laws of that society which is to renew the image of God in man, they are the laws by which man, as man, ought to live, the laws of human life in all departments. They define the spirit in which a man is to live, the general character of human duty; but this spirit has to work in the body of the

The Christian laws of corporate life apply, not only to the social life of the Church, but to all social relations.

actual, everyday relations between man and man—the general character has to take special shape in application to the special duties of every part of the life of man in every age. There are not one set of laws for the life of man as a member of the society of the Christian Church, and quite another set for his life as a member, say, of the family, or the State, or of society in any other aspect. Rather, these different spheres of social life make up a part of that whole mass of human conduct which has to be inspired and ruled by these principles. In all alike the same laws obtain, the same image of God has to be shown forth. In the life of the Church itself is their first and clearest application, just because the object of the Church is their universal application. And if they obtain in a different way between men who recognize a common source for the common Spirit which rules and sanctifies their lives, and receive God's grace by His appointed means, they obtain also in regulating our everyday relations to those who live, as we do, in the reception of that degree of grace which, by whatever means, God gives to them, even though they do not recognize, as we do, the source from which it comes, or use the means through which it is ordained to flow.

So, then, we should not be prevented from working

out the application of these principles to the various spheres of everyday life, either because we may seem to be applying them to worldly matters, or because we are applying them to our dealings, not only with one another, but with worldly men. It is our duty to spiritualize the whole of our life; it is our duty to behave as Christians to all men; as far as ever they will allow us, to apply to our relations to them the rules which are set to regulate the conduct of the members of Christ one to another.

I propose here to suggest the application of these principles to one special part of our life. God has made us men members one of another in a thousand ways—in this among others, that we live, and support our daily material life, and provide ourselves and one another with the necessaries and pleasures of life as members of one body. If I am to use the ordinary technical term, I propose to ask, what bearing on our economic duties have the principles of Christ as defined by S. Paul? I need not insist specially in this relation that our Christian duty as to the material side of our life is to spiritualize it, to transfuse it with spiritual principles; this will appear sufficiently by the way.

Among others, to economic duties, viz.,

1. Take first, then, the law of mutual dependence one on another of the members of a body. "The eye

cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." In the original passage S. Paul is dealing with independence in the form of conceit, an exaggerated view of the value and importance of our own endowments, especially of our own wisdom and knowledge. But there are other forms of independence besides conceit.

(1) the law of mutual dependence between man and man;

Now, independence in the matters I am speaking of is commonly reckoned a virtue. And this view represents one side of the truth. It is good for a man to make his own living. "If any will not work, neither should he eat." It is good to feel that we live on what we earn, that our support and our pleasures are the fair due of our services. It is good and right even to rest thankfully and securely in the possession of what is lawfully and rightly our own, whether we have earned it, or whether it has been earned by others, and given or bequeathed to us. It is a fair and good ground of confidence to feel that there is nothing we use or enjoy of which we cannot say, "I bought it, and have paid for it, or can pay for it. It is as truly mine as if I had made it." For the moment, let us put all this aside without further consideration, and look only at the other side of the truth. This is true independence; but there is a true

dependence which goes along with it, and the denial of which is a false independence.

Our means of life fairly earned and received are our own. Well, if they are received by gift or bequest, it is not hard to see that we are also dependent. Our whole material life, then, is a gift, truly ours; but a gift the creation, the workmanship of some one else. It is some one else's doing, not ours. There is the fact to be remembered—we are dependent on others, though it may be on those who have passed away out of our sight. And if our means of life are earned, what then? Why, then, surely S. Paul's words come in, "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee." We earn as parts of a system dependent on others and on the whole. Eye and hand, indeed, have their parallel in the direction and the work of almost any industry, mental or bodily; and far more complex than the interdependence of the parts of the physical body are the mutual give and take between the infinitely various members of that spiritual organism—for spiritual it is—by which we enable each other to provide for one another's needs and for our own.

True, this system may be presented rather as a combination for self help, in which each member is pursuing his own ends. Let it be so. I am not at

present concerned with our ends. Let us get the bare fact that, in earning what we call our own, we do depend, and depend very largely, on others. It is needless to trace the same truth through the process by which we use our means, and buy and pay for what we want. It is ours; we pay for it. By all means; but for what is ours we do depend on others. They have their own motive for providing it, no doubt; but there it is provided, and we depend on its being provided for our sustenance and comfort. As matter may be analyzed into an assemblage of forces, so the sustenance and comfort of our lives is made up by and in its very substance consists of the work, the energy, the life of other men.

And this is not all. We do depend for mere material things, not only on the actual work and contribution of others, but on moral and spiritual qualities in them, to which self-interest is at best but a contributory motive, and which often lie altogether beyond the range of its effects. It is difficult for any one who has thought of it to speak coldly of the vast spiritual machinery of our economic life. Look only at a single force in it. Look at the working of trust. See how far we live on trust, by observing with what horror we discover its violation, and the social outlawry which visits the crime. How vast

an amount of the business of the world, by which our needs are supplied, rests upon the assumption that any given man is what he professes to be, and will do what he professes to do! We depend upon trustworthiness; we live on it.

Or, again, to take an instance in every one's personal experience, how much we depend on kindness! In the largest single industry in the country, that of domestic service, we all know that our needs are not met without a fellow-feeling and a sympathy which wages cannot buy. A good servant means a sympathetic servant. We depend upon kindness; we live on it; it is our very breath.

Here, then, to start with, is a fact. For your life, for your living, however wholly you support yourself, no less wholly you depend on others. We are apt to dwell on the value of independence until we forget this, until we feel as if we stood alone in a comfort and ease of our own making. I do not ask yet what consequences we draw as to our liberty to use our means as we will. It is not the fact; we do not stand alone; we are dependent upon others, dependent for everything, for what is most our own, and very peevishly we take it if they fail us in that for which we have been used to depend on them.

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This is one side of the truth, then, about the support of our lives. We depend upon others.

(2) the law of dependence on God;

2. Now let us go back upon the other side of our position, that we depend upon ourselves, and that our lives are our own, and let us look at this in the full light of S. Paul's second principle of social life. What hast thou which thou hast not received? What, indeed? Is there anything which can be said of spiritual endowments, of "the grace given to every man, according to the measure of the gift of Christ,"—as that there is no good thing in us, no power, or quality, or faculty, or condition which is not the grace or gift of God—is there anything like this which cannot be said also, and with equal truth, of material gifts, and the faculties that concern them? Restrict your vision for a moment to what your earthly eyes can see—to these material things of beauty and pleasure and comfort with which your life is surrounded, and measure even by them, as they pour upon the bodily senses of the man who receives them, the "proclive weight and rush" of that full stream of the Everlasting Love of God, which casts up these as mere light foam to brighten its surface, and to betray, even while they veil from view, the awful depth and strength of the Eternal tide!

In a general way we acknowledge, of course, that

all is the gift of God. But with what reality? That home in which you live, its space, its warmth, its light, its comfort, these are the gift of God, and so is the power to enjoy them. Books and pictures, and the pleasures of hospitality, and of talk with your friends, these are the gift of God, and so are the higher powers which they employ. That investment from which you draw a part of your income, this business which you conduct, this office where you direct men's minds and hands, the power and scope they give to the energy of mind and will, in whose exercise you revel even more than you do in their results, these are the gift of God. Sometimes, perhaps, we dare not remember that they are so, for the use that we make of them. How much more the home, the power to marry, the memories of happy years sown with self-sacrifice and self-denial, fruitful in the joys of love; bright children's faces, and sons and daughters grown up in strength and beauty to be the joy of age! If these things stand for the use by which, most of all, you have made what you have earned your own, surely these are indeed the gift of God.

Yes; and in all these we are within the range and scope of that Eternal purpose of predestinating love, by which He purposed to reconcile you to Himself, through Him, Who is not only "the Head of the Body,

the Church," but "the image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature," Who is "before all things, and by Him all things consist;" "the true Light, Which lighteneth every man; Who was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Know Him. You know Him in grace, in that He has given you "power to be the sons of God." Know Him here, too, in this natural order of His working, now illumined and transfigured by the light and life of grace. Know Him, it is He in "Whom all fulness dwells," of Whom you have received all things that are good.

What hast thou that thou hast not received? Nay, what art thou that thou hast not received? Pass from the outward gifts to the body, soul, and spirit of yourself. You, the clay moulded and inbreathed by His love, what are you but a vessel, a power to receive His gifts—and *that* a gift; a vessel filled with all that He can pour upon you, by His love made visible in the human hands of those on whom your life depends? What are you? Nothing more? Yes; there is one gift more—the power to give back that which you have received.

3. From Him, in the words of S. Paul's own statement of the third law of social life, the law of help, "the whole Body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint

(3) the law of mutual help.

supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love." Have material interests, do you think, no part in this blessing? Is not our intercourse in material things the very body into which this Spirit has to flow? Was it not in dealings with material needs that this Spirit was first set forth visibly before our eyes, and men "beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"? Should not the Spirit of Christ be at home in these things, not as an occasional intruder, to effect a compromise in disagreement, to demand an alms for accidental poverty, but as the governing and pervading principle, harmonizing the efforts and the wills of all in our common war with want and pain? What are you at all in the economy of God's world, as revealed in the revelation of His Son, unless you live, and live altogether, for the use of others? The eye is for seeing, the hand for shaping, and man for helping; and you for *your* work, for *your* help to the body, for your peculiar service, and for nothing else. For what else do you receive all that God gives to you? "Indeed, the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee;" what is it for but to guide the hand? You have need of that on which to bestow what you

have received. This is the general law of the function of any part of a body, that it should help. Those with whom you have to do, whether through man's sin their call ever reaches the ears of their soul or not, are predestined with you, in the purpose of God, to show forth His love. As God is known to us as Love, so we, who are made and renewed in His image, are made to transmit, and in transmitting to reflect and embody the love that is poured upon ourselves. This is the whole spiritual substance and reality of our being. And the greatest gifts of love are these: powers to help, powers to do good, powers to be like God, in the systematic and deliberate working of plans and purposes of love, living ourselves out in them, manifesting in them what we are. And so the body, the society, grows and makes increase, and builds itself up in the likeness of God—the Body of Him Who is the brightness of God's glory, "and the express image of His Person," and we contribute, each in our measure, to its growth and to its glory.

Each in our own employment and position in life have to view it as the employment and position of a member of the Body of Christ, living on the life of others, receiving love from God, receiving it in substantial shape, that we may show it forth in lives of love towards those with whose lives God has

entwined our own. In lives of love—love that is no passing feeling of a luxurious hour of religious meditation, but the controlling and informing power of a life of work ; love that is no meaningless sentiment, but a principle, sober and deliberate, working by rule, aiming at clear ends by methods that will always bear the light, with strenuous, steadfast will, inspired day by day by the Universal and Eternal Love of God ; love that will make sacred with its presence and its touch all that we are and all that we enjoy, and measure daily duties by the Divine standard of that Eternal Love, Which builds up the dust out of which we are made into the image and likeness of God.

X.

THE ETHICS OF DIVISION OF LABOUR.

A supposed omission in the theory of division of labour.

It has been noted as a curious omission in Adam Smith's enumeration of the economic advantages of the division of labour, that he does not include the advantage which arises from each man doing the work which suits him best. It would have been very remarkable if the master, who surpasses most of his disciples in the human interest he finds in his subject, should have omitted to notice the most distinctively human element in the economic system he describes at the outset of his work. The fact is, that the advantage of individual talent and capacity is disguised in the list given by Adam Smith, under the term, "increased dexterity of the workman." This appears in the section "Of the principle which gives occasion to the division of labour," where he argues that the difference of natural talents in different men, is

much less than we are aware of, and that the apparent difference is "not the cause, but the effect of division of labour," and arises, "not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education."

It is much more remarkable, and a very curious instance of the unconscious arrogance of the science founded on the speculations of Adam Smith, imagining itself to be a spontaneous growth of these later centuries, like the industrial system, whose method it reflected and described, and in no way indebted to the wisdom of earlier ages, that the late Professor Fawcett, in noting the supposed omission of Adam Smith, should represent the missing principle as supplied by the discovery of Mr. Babbage! The reader who studies Political Economy as a part of the knowledge of the social life of men, governed by the principles which the experience and the wisdom of ages has established, though one age has differed from another in the mode of their expression, will be inclined to wonder why Mr. Babbage should invent what is the leading principle in the most important constructive work of Plato, even if there do not float across his mind some hazy memories from the writings of S. Paul. Most people will be inclined to agree with Plato, and Mr. Babbage, and Professor Fawcett, and to think that the differences of natural talent

and ability, transmitted or created by the intricate laws of heredity, are material, and are clearly distinct from the special aptitudes resulting from the education and the habit of the individual life. A consideration, such as we here propose, of division of labour, as representing the moral method of economic life, might proceed upon either theory, regarding the differentiation of individual capacity, with Adam Smith, as the effect of industrial organization, or, with our other authorities, as partly its cause and partly its effect. I shall prefer, as a matter of fact, to proceed upon the latter hypothesis, because I believe it to be true in itself. I shall do so without discussing the alternative, because I suppose this to be the more generally accepted view.

The division of labour implies the combination of labourers and the division of functions.

It has been observed that division of labour is not an altogether fortunate name for the system of industrial organization which it is used to denote. This system has two main features—the combination of labourers, and the division of functions. The division is a feature in the development of that combination, which is the first step towards what might, perhaps, be best described as a whole under the name of the organization of labour.

The first question, then, which we have to ask in a

moral view of the system is, what leads men to combine? And we may go to Plato for our answer. It is "our need"—our common need, our mutual need one of another. Poverty is the first moral endowment of man. He faces the world with need as his spur to energy, the curse which he has to convert into a blessing. Sheer physical need is his first safeguard against sloth, and remains his safeguard against selfishness. Common need is the source of fellowship. The mere fact of need appeals to that human sympathy, which is the sense of a condition that we share. And the desire of that enrichment of life, which enables us to satisfy anything more than the most elementary needs of physical existence, is a constant motive to engage in that organized system of life, of which mutual need is the very spirit and life.

1. Need is the source of combination.

One is sometimes disposed to regret that the desire to limit the range of an excessive interference in the working of the economic system, on the part of the State, led the science of economics to assume the name of Political Economy. But the name seems in some degree to mark the fact that man, as an economic animal, as a creature that provides by deliberate methods for his physical needs, is essentially a social animal. The general reason and knowledge of right

which is embodied in law, and animates a political constitution, strictly so called, is active in the form of social instinct in organizing the economic system. Construe this instinct into an explicit principle, and it declares, not indeed that nature is an enemy with whom man's single force does not enable him to cope; but, at least, that nature invites that combination and organization of human forces, by which the resources of nature are disclosed, and the social character of man is realized and wrought out. It gives an abiding moral value to the organization of labour, that it keeps constantly in view the sheer need which is the first impulse to the vigour and fellowship of social life; that it emphasizes fellowship as the condition of mere life; and, above all, that it exhibits the necessity, which, indeed, it tends to exaggerate into a misfortune, of mutual dependence and mutual support. The worst evils incident to the working of the economic system have at least this moral advantage: so far from disguising, they declare that need is the first condition of life, that mutual need and its correlative, mutual help, are the constant condition of happiness. The facts that are eloquent in declaring the principle may speak of need unsatisfied in the poor, whom we have always with us, of the privilege of help disregarded, and the

duty of relieving need undone. But eloquent they are, nevertheless, of the first and last condition of spiritual progress, in the poverty whose physical example is the parable and sacrament of that spiritual insufficiency of man to himself, which makes the poor in spirit blest. The system, indeed, preserves the vitality of the moral principle of need more and more completely as it is more and more efficiently developed. The needs of the savage, whose life affords the lowest example of the organization of labour, though they may press hard upon what seems to us all but an impoverished life, are nothing to those of any member of a civilized society, whom no perfection of industrial organization will allow to forget that any one of the various needs, for whose satisfaction he has learnt to trust to the efforts of his fellow-men, may fail him in the last resort, and leave him the poorer for the remembrance of what is lost. Mutual need is the very life of the system. It supplies the constant pressure which keeps every man in his place and at work, when energy and higher motives fail. And this is in itself a moral and spiritual advantage, the constant reading of a lesson as to that character of the nature of man, which no moral or spiritual, far less any material progress obliterate from our minds, except to our loss.

2. The system of the organization thus rests upon a foundation, grows out of a root of human need. This is the original motive to organize and to combine, and it is a motive which remains constantly in operation. We have next to consider the principle on which the system works. This principle is the performance by every individual member of the society of some particular function, for which he has the requisite natural aptitude, and has received the requisite training. Plato has summarized the duty of the member of a society in a phrase of untranslateable simplicity,[1] which we can only represent in relation to the present matter by saying, that the duty of any member of the economic body is to perform the economic function which is his own.

2. Division of function is the principle on which it works,

discerning and defining for the individual (*a*) his power to help;

It should be observed, first, that this principle assumes a natural obligation, arising out of a natural capacity to help. If poverty is the first, the faculty of help is the second of the moral endowments of man. Man, as man, possesses it, though man differs from man in the form which it may take. In the power to share his fellow's need, and to identify it with his own, he has the faculty of conceiving a social purpose and a social end; in the power to will a common or

[1] Τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν.

collective good, he has in him that which converts all physical capacities for the service of his own life into faculties for the service of others. And this faculty grows into an obligation. By its mere presence and existence it presses towards its own realization. Its first movement reveals that what seemed the desire of an individual was in idea, and must become in fact, the impulse of the fragment and part of a collective life. And this collective life, revealed as the condition of the individual, existence, becomes the source of that kind of motive which we distinguish from mere desire as obligation or duty. But what we find in men, as a matter of fact, and in ourselves, is not the mere faculty and correspondent obligation to help in the abstract, but faculties often difficult to discern and define, but, when rightly discerned and successfully defined, precise and particular in their tendency and scope, giving rise to desires and ambitions—obligations, if their fulfilment were not thwarted by the perversities of life; duties, if they were not transformed by the magic of the spirit of help, whose patient working meets and overmasters every difficulty and every check—transformed into higher duties of abnegation and self-sacrifice. If ever our system of education becomes anything more than a haphazard jumble of preparation for examinations of a greater

or less degree of practical inutility; if ever the discernment of human individuality and the development of various capacity is recognized as an essential part of that moral training of the whole man, which is not yet seen to be its purpose and its scope, we may succeed in strewing the waysides of human industry with fewer wrecks of thwarted and deformed desire, of stunted and perverted ambition, of power to help, and joy in congenial service, wasted, withered, and trodden under foot. As it is, let us at least see that division of labour rightly means that every man has some work which he is fitted to do, in which he is destined to rejoice, through which he is called, by a Divine vocation to convey his own peculiar share of that Divine blessing, which is bestowed through the agency of human wills and hearts; though the work may be undone, the rejoicing not even longed for, because it is unknown, the call unheard, and the blessing suspended over lives that have to find another blessing, or to go unblest, because we have not learned that man is made to help—that each man is made to help in his own way, shaped by laws and forces which we do not yet understand, but whose results we can perceive if we will, or disregard if we choose, to our loss.

And, following the development of the principle

in those cases, in which this need is not disregarded, let us see, further, how the natural faculty and natural obligation, as they demand a special education, so exact a particular devotion. They exact it; and where a man finds his true vocation, he may see how they find it—find it often in spite of imperfect and ill-directed education—and make the happiness of lives absorbed in congenial duty, where every power is employed and is at work, and duty and desire become so far identified, that the intoxication of unimpeded energy brings the danger of overtasking the powers of a brain and heart, whose labour is tiring in proportion as they work in one. Contrast the life of the man whose life is spent in the work, not merely which he likes, but which he can do, which gives scope to his special ability, with that of the man who is busy, but in work for which he has no special fitness, and towards which he has no natural disposition, whether because what special fitness or natural disposition was in him has never been drawn out or discovered, or because the dull necessity of an imperfect organization of labour has forced upon him the need of some work, but has precluded him from that which he would choose, or, at any rate, has found him none but this. The life of a man should be, as far as he and others can make it

(*b*) the life in which it finds vent;

so, one steady progress from a dimly felt desire, through a clearly conceived ambition, to the daily more perfect performance of a task, in which the capacity to hope for perfection would be the source of ceaseless efforts to excel the standard that has been attained, to desire new methods and imagine higher aims, and in which the stern control of duty would be felt none the less, because duty was allowed to be the guide to happiness and help.

(c) the sacrifice and the subordination which it demands.

There is a moral gain and a nobility, no doubt—for those who can rise to this view of their misfortune—in the earnest spirit of self-sacrifice and humility, with which good men abandon the life they would have loved for that which the necessity of their own lives, or of those they love, forces upon a reluctant nature, and upon a mind that is always longing to glance aside at some other aim. By no means let us ignore or underrate the moral rank of a virtue, for which our system affords so many opportunities. In any conceivable perfection of the working of the system of division of labour, there must be many dull lives, many careers in which labour cannot excite a lively interest, though it may enjoy a real alleviation in other and collateral pursuits. Sacrifice and humility of this kind the organization of labour will

always demand, and if the nature of the person who has humbly to submit to the sacrifice is not outraged and wronged by the task which we set him to do, such sacrifice and humility will be near akin to those which the system of division of labour forces upon all, who have to choose for life a defined and limited career, and to content themselves with performing, as their personal contribution, some small part only of the work whose success they wish to see achieved. For every definite career involves the self-sacrifice of limitation, of limitation to be accepted in the end at which we are allowed to aim, of limitation to be overcome in the means which are offered to our use. All ambitions look large at the first; they narrow down to the dimensions of fact. The first dream is vast; it shrinks to the level of human stature. Its vastness was no illusion in itself; it was prophetic of what shall be accomplished through us, unless we be misled by vanity, and in so far as our efforts have not failed our hope. Through us, but not by us. Ours is the small and limited part of what we saw should be done. Still less can the mind, confident in the choice of its vocation, predict the means, unchosen and uncongenial to the fancy of an untaught desire, through which, by the reluctant sacrifice of fancy, an accomplishment of ambition shall be wrought, far

exceeding in substantial joy and good the wide and shadowy imaginations of youth. Nor will the inevitable sacrifice even thus obtain its fruit, unless mind and heart are humble to unlearn mistakes, to banish false ideals, to be guided by the thread of duty which cannot be mistaken, along roads whose course we cannot see to lead to the end which we desire. The law of the organization of labour is, every man to his own function—every man to a limited function, small in comparison with the aim by which its fulfilment ought to be inspired, small in comparison with the complex system of human forces by which alone any great aim can be attained, in which every ambition, however justly high, must be content to be subordinate. Nor is it allowed to any consolatory knowledge that the object for which we sacrifice is worthy, and the work to which we contribute great, to rob sacrifice of the reality and the pain of its denial, or to make humility a disguise of pride. In mere worldly success, it is the men who make sacrifices, or accept them, coolly and relentlessly, who win the race ; it is the men who actually and really do think nothing too small or too mean for their attention and their effort, who rise to positions of command, and even then do not lose their humility. Meanwhile, every sacrifice and every humble life is ennobled, in which it is felt that

we bear our part, however small, in the work which God works from the foundation of the world, and bring into the sacrifices which we make for the sake of those we love, and those with whom we live, the spirit of the one Sacrifice once made by Him, Who came to do God's Will and was content to do it.

These, then, are the principles involved in the system by which each man performs the particular function which is assigned to him—the principles of sacrifice and of humility.

3. Lastly, we have to ask, what is the moral issue towards which the working of this system leads. And the answer is, that the ideal of organization is spiritual union. As he is led along the path which the division of labour assigns to him, a man ceases to expect to do or be the whole of that which his ideal or his hope held before him. But he and his work become a part of a larger whole. The larger end which he serves fills his vision and absorbs his desire. He is greater because he is a part of a greater thing, and a part in such wise that the greatness is distributed to all the parts, and not divided amongst them. For the division of function itself is a part of the accomplishment of any particular design, and a man glories in a limitation which, in himself and in others, contributes more than anything

3. Spiritual union is the issue towards which it leads.

else to the fulfilment of their common end. And, in proportion as he sees this to be the case, will the labourer in some partial province of a single industry see in his limited labour, not merely a contribution to this single end, but his own share in the attainment of the universal end of that unconscious organization of mankind for common happiness in mutual help, which all special organizations of labour, undertaken in the true spirit, serve to make at once more conscious and more perfect. And this organization itself, and the spirit that belongs to it, become to every single labourer who is subject to them, as they are in truth and in themselves, a good to be aimed at and achieved, to be lived for and enjoyed, in any and every particular organization in which this spirit is embodied and obeyed. As "business" is a magic word to business men, calling up a whole ideal of trustworthy character and methodical sense directed to any end that may happen to be in view, so labour or work comes to mean the organized system of life, in which a man gives himself and his whole powers to the particular work that he has in hand, knowing that in doing so he gives himself to the spirit in which that work is done—the spirit of mutual subordination, seen as the high end of human work, and of millions of laborious lives, in which men can

detach their spiritual vision from the details through which, nevertheless, this spirit is realized in fact, and concentrate it upon the spiritual object itself—the mutual subordination of soul to soul, in the universal labour of human help.

And last, but not least, the worker in the organized system of labour learns and practices subordination not only to a great ideal end, and helps not only the life of a dimly conceived community, living and working for the most part out of his sight. The vision of this ideal and the devotion to humanity are inspired and made real by the sight of human faces, and the feeling of human needs in men and women and children above him and below him and around him, towards whom his own daily and definite task directs his eyes, with whom his daily labour is a bond. The atoms of this great spiritual organization are human atoms after all. They cohere by human love and kindness and help, by a humility and a forbearance which are practical and real, which make ties between soul and soul of memory and gratitude and familiar love.

Even in the smallest corner of the world of labour, those who work together, just because they work each at their own appointed part, diverge minutely but really from one another along diverse roads, the

intervals between which must be bridged by sympathy and self-denial. Each has to live out the spirit of his own peculiar work, and to harmonize one with another the ideas which shape themselves from day to day in the mind of each, as to how his particular part of the general object is to be attained, and in what relation to the parts with which other men are charged. Perhaps it is in these details that the keenest moral test is applied by the organization of labour to those who share in it, where they are called by it to follow in His footsteps, Who not only said of Himself, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," but of Whom it was said, "He pleased not Himself."

XI.

PROPERTY.

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"—S. Matt. xx. 15.

One of the delusions as to economic duty, of which we have to dispose, is that in economic matters we have to do with things, or with people who may be treated as things. This is especially the case when we are dealing with commodities as property. It is curious, therefore, that the words which are probably most often the subject of unconscious quotation, when a man claims the full and unlimited right of property, are originally used, not of things, but of persons. It is the eternal wage of the spiritual labour of life, the destiny of the undying soul, of which it is said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" In fact, we never reach the moral or spiritual truth of any, the slightest of mere material things, until we

The property of God in the persons and souls of men is the type of property in things.

have reached through it, and found out the personal relations of which it is the occasion or the result. It is a touching-point between soul and soul, between the soul and the Eternal Spirit. When the memory of it arises in that flash of universal recollection, which we may picture as an element in the judgment of the lives of men, it will recall the pain of remembered hate, or the pleasure of remembered love, the remorse of neglected duty, or the gratitude for duty done.

Plato has made Socrates say of the soul of man, that it is a possession of the gods; and it is virtually of this possession that it is said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Certainly, the Bible claims for God, over and over again, the right to dispose of man as His property, His own. "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"[1] "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"[2] "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we are all the work of Thy Hand."[3] The burden

[1] Rom. ix. 20. [2] Isa. xlv. 9. [3] Isa. lxiv. 8.

throughout is, "Is it not lawful for Him to do what He will with his own?"

In a moral view, as we have said, we never deal with things; always with the persons, of our relation with whom things are the symbol and occasion. Every assertion of property in things is a virtual assertion of property in some part or feature in the lives of others. It is worth while, then, to see what limits the Bible suggests for the right of property, in that instance in which property in souls is most indisputable and most absolute—the ownership of God over the souls and bodies of men whom He has created.

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" There is the assertion to the right; but it is asserted plainly and clearly here only as the right to do good. "Is thine eye evil because I am good?" And where it seems to be asserted otherwise, as by S. Paul, in the passage quoted above, it is in controversy with those who deny God's possession, and question His justice and His love, to whom the only possible answer is an assertion of the abstract right. The nature of the right and the law of its exercise are, indeed, always to be found in the subject in whom it resides. The child, who forgets the wisdom of a mother's or a father's love, can only

be met by the demand of implicit obedience to a right that has no limit, except what it gives to itself as the command of love. There is tenderness as well as power in the words, "Is it not lawful for *Me* to do what I will with *Mine own?*"

Let us follow out the nature and source of the right of property in things, as it is commonly claimed. The parallel of God's ownership of men will scarcely forsake us at any step of the way.

1. Property as the result of the creative power of labour.

1. The simplest and most obvious source of the right of property is labour. We have seen that when the Bible claims for God the right of ownership, the claim is made on the ground of creation. Man, made in the image of God, has the image of the creative power, in his prerogative to fashion, out of the elements supplied to him, that which, because he has made it, he shall feel to be his own. Out of the indifferent mass of material things his judgment has chosen that which will answer his purpose. The mere raw material of labour is his by the right of discernment and choice. His mind has gone out upon it, and is embodied in it, as a thing set apart to be the subject of his labour and to serve his end. And actual labour itself makes things the record, the vehicle, and the embodiment, of the will, and effort, and purpose, by which they

are fashioned and shaped, until the original stuff is so disguised, that there seems to be nothing left of what was given to the forming hand. Where land in its natural state still remains to be appropriated for the first time by the labour of man, it is by the labour, first of fencing in, and then of cultivation, that the right of property may be claimed. That on which a man has spent his labour has become a part of himself, his soul has gone out upon it, his mind and will have left their impress upon it, nothing but his own gift can alienate from him that which his hands have made to be what it is.

Law secures to men what their labour has made. Law constitutes property; that is, property is a social fact, the creation of society. But the social conscience proceeds upon principles in allowing and securing property to this man or to that. It is with the principles on which it proceeds that we have here to do, and, first, with the general social recognition, more or less perfectly embodied in law, that a man is entitled to possess what he has made.

This claim to property pursues the results of labour through the most complicated processes of exchange and distribution. There are other principles on which property depends, but they in turn depend on this. A man may own what has been given to him, or has

descended to him by a succession of gifts. At the other end of the chain will be the man whose labour first gave him the right to possess, and therefore the right to give. A man may come to be the recognized possessor of what has not been given to him, even where it is not the result of his own creative labour, if his use, in which labour is an element, has assumed for him the property in that which had subsided, as unused, into the condition of raw material, of an unappropriated natural thing. A man owns what he earns because we recognize that, through the division of labour and its produce, this is what he has virtually made, it is his own.

There are higher and lower degrees of property, according to the amount, and to the individual character of the labour which has created that which is possessed. The labour of mind and will and hand is often directed through the immediate subject of labour to some object, which, by means of it, is to be attained. Where the heart is in the object itself which is fashioned by the hand, there seems a closer and more indissoluble union between the maker and that which he has made. Authors and artists have a love for the works in which their soul has gone out from them; and no sale or exchange can altogether alienate from its spiritual owner the

creation of genius or the work of love. The man who sets his heart even on making a fortune, loves his wealth more than the son to whom he bequeaths it. Aristotle has observed how this principle of affection going out into that on which we have spent our pains is an element even in friendship, in the case of those who feel persistently well-disposed towards men on whom they have conferred a benefit.[1] It is, perhaps, a deeper view of the same truth to say that a man cannot easily detach himself from that on which he has spent his love. Men do, in fact, extend the range of their personality in life, in the lives whose opportunities and resources they create or increase by gifts; and prolong their existence, their will, and their affection beyond their death, in those to whom they bequeath the result of their labours.

2. And this is the second source of property—gift. By the gift of the living or of the dead, as well as by our own labour, we hold things to be our own. Here property is a directly social thing. The right whose origin is in the labour of the original maker and possessor, secured to him by the social recognition of the public conscience and by law, is secured by the same authority, as a right of another kind, to the man to whom he has chosen to

2. Property as the result of gift from the living or the dead,

[1] Arist., "Eth. Nic.," IV. i. 20; IX. vii. 4. Plato, "Rep.," i. 330.

make a gift of that which was his own. To the new owner it belongs by the exercise of the good will of the giver. All property bequeathed is our own plainly by this right. There are cases in which the bequest is rather the transmission of an ancestral purpose, for the preservation of the corporate existence of a family in its several successive representatives, than the gift of the immediately preceding owner. But some original labour or service, some exertion of power over the subject of property has been the first source of ownership, and some transmission by gift has made ownership a right to the present possessor.

whether directly or through the process of exchange.

But there is another and equally important case of appropriation by gift. We have observed that, under the existing system of division of labour and exchange of produce, a man possesses much of what he owns as the indirect result of his own labour. It is to be observed, however, that this strictly applies only to that portion of the produce of the common labour which would have resulted from his own unaided work; and, since a division is inconceivable of the hypothetical produce of isolated labour from the rest of the joint result of the organized work of mankind, we may say that, in the ownership even of what a man earns, there enters into his right another element

besides the right to own that which he creates. In all exchange, by which we receive our share of the joint produce of the labour in which we bear a part, there is an element of gift. Exchange, indeed, is a mutual gift. The free-will of the other party to the exchange, conveying what is his to us, is the source of our right to its possession. But, beyond this, combination multiplies the produce of toil, and the actual produce we receive is not merely—as the result of labour itself—a gift of God, like the endowments of whose use it comes; it is a social gift, received from those who willingly share with us, as we with them, the fruit of fellowship. The social character of property by gift belongs, therefore, not only to that which we owe to the express personal donation of friends alive or dead, but also to all that passes to us by exchange, in which are involved, as a part of the forces that have created it, not merely the separate labour of every hand that has had a part in its production, but also all the forces of that fellowship, into which men have been drawn under the impulse to provide for the common life.

The gift of inheritance may come to us laden with the memories of individual love, with the traditions of usefulness and of good will embodied in the substance, stamped on the very surface of that which we inherit.

Property may be, then, eloquent of the duties which arise out of its social character as a gift. Or, again, it may come to us from unworthy or reluctant hands. If it should do so, we shall surely feel, not that it is freed from the burden of social obligations, but rather, that it bears a larger debt, that its ownership carries the burden of a duty, to make up in some measure the arrears of use and fellowship in which others have failed, to embody in it the spirit, through which the mere fact that it is a gift at all should colour it, consecrating and beautifying the dull and unlovely material of selfishness or sin with the purifying and ennobling energies of love.

It may seem a paradox to import into the product of a process of exchange, conducted, probably, it will be said, on strictly business principles, the incongruous associations of gift or of good will. The answer to this objection is twofold. In the first place, as a matter of fact, direct and personal good will, and the pleasure in being able to give to others the good which our combined labour puts at every man's command, are very much more real and practical forces in the economic world, than the picture left on our minds by popular economic science would lead us to imagine. Fortunately, when the question once occurs to our minds, we can appeal to our experience

to correct the result of an abuse of unscientific imagination.

But even in so far as this is not the case, and where the individual from whose hands we actually receive what is the bounty of the spirit of fellowship, or, at least, the result of the combination of men to serve their common needs, has not himself acted in this spirit or desired this result, we need not keep our possessions as the clothing and embodiment of a selfishness which does good against its will. The enriched possessions which we have and enjoy are the produce of a system which, like every other bodily existence —like the system of inheritance, for example—has a spirit which belongs to it, and is at home in it. In obedience to this spirit its purposes are best fulfilled. This is the relation of the spirit of good will to the system of exchange. Exchange is essentially exchange of good, and of good the greater because of the system which makes exchange necessary. All the purposes of the interchange of good are more truly and completely answered, if exchange is carried out in the spirit of good will. We are, as a matter of fact, indebted to the man from whom we receive that increase of produce which is due to combination. Reluctantly or willingly, hypocritically or sincerely, he has given us a gift. It should have been given in the spirit of

giving. If it was not, it brings with it a share in that sad, but self-rewarding duty which forms a part of almost every social obligation—the duty of acting up to an ideal which we desire the more to see realized in fact, because fact, as it is, contrasts with it.

3. Property as the result of use, which is the duty of possession and its privilege.

3. We have, so far, spoken of labour and gift as the sources of the right of property, without drawing out the obligations which arise from the consideration that they are so. It is the fulfilment of those obligations which constitutes the third element in the right of property —use.

Use is not often in itself a source of the right of property. It is so in some cases. Right of way is an instance in which use can deprive one man of exclusive possession, and transfer a share in what belongs to him to others. Prescription, again, is an instance of use superseding any other rights of property, whatever they may be. But, over a much wider field than is covered by such instances as these, use is an element that enters into the right of possession. We have seen that law, and the operation of the social conscience, secure to man the possession of what has become his own by his own labour, or by gift and bequest. It does not seem too much to say that this security is given, within very large limits, on

condition of use, and is barred by any flagrant misuse of what is otherwise rightly possessed. Property is constituted by law; where there is no law, actual or implicit, there is no property strictly so called. But law claims in this, as in other matters, to act with absolute freedom for the general good. It is held to be for the general good that the rights of property should be left as unconstrained as may be. But they are left unconstrained to the performance of duty, on the part of those who hold them, because it is held to be for the general good that they should be so, because it is believed that this furnishes the best stimulus and security for their use. It remains none the less true that the principle and condition, on which the rights of property are secured by law, is that they should be used for the public good.

We feel use to be an element in possession. A man scarcely realizes that he has property until he has used it. There is a far more real and genuine possession on the part of those who use their property than on the part of those who neglect it. As the sustaining power of God in creation carries on the creative force itself, so the use which realizes possession is often scarcely distinguishable from the labour which creates it. Property is a living right, existing in its exercise. It should be the occasion of the constant putting forth

of force; it should be the sphere of wise design and energetic work, the field for the development of all the faculties of that personality to which it is attached. And further, as we have implied, use in this relation means use for good, use for the good of others. Here, again, we feel that true use makes true possession. A spendthrift can scarcely ever be said to possess the wealth, which he allows to slip through his fingers in purposeless waste, nor a miser to have any property in that which lies idle in his idle hands.

True possession implies use, and use for good. And this is not only the last realization, but the duty and privilege of property. It is its duty. The man who owns what has cost labour, and does not labour with it, is false to the principle on which he lives. The man who owns what is the outcome of the working of the spirit of fellowship and good will, or the direct bequest of love, and does not use in love and in good will what they have given, commits a distinct and undoubted wrong against those from whom he has received what he calls his own. Property carries with it, not the exemption from labour, but the tradition and the duty of labour. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? At least do—do something. Do not let it rest and lie idle. It is your own, it is a part of yourself. You are responsible for

it, for its inaction and its inutility, not less than you would be for dishonesty in gaining, or for wrong and crime in using it.

It is a duty to use it for the good of others. And this duty covers the whole field of its use. It is a duty, and the duty, like all duties, is a spiritual privilege. It is your own, a part of yourself, of the personality which is consecrated by the possession of God and of the Spirit which works everywhere and always in love. And throughout, in every part of it, you are in contact with the souls and bodies of men who need, and who, through the true use of that which you possess, may be satisfied and enriched. There is a sacrifice demanded of the ease and unrestraint of possession in the constant energies of use and help. It may be that the duty of use may lead along a harder road, and call upon you literally to sacrifice and give up that which is your own. In some measure this degree of sacrifice is required of all, who have anything that they can call their own. All property needs the initiatory sacrifice of the clear gift of a part to God and to the purposes of love, if the rest is to be filled in energetic labour, and in helpful use with the spirit that consecrates possession.

You, and all that you have, are His, Who owns you,

in right of His creation. He will not possess you except by your own gift of yourself. And the object of this gift is that you may be filled by the Spirit, Which will use you for the fulfilment of the purposes of the Eternal Love.

XII.

"GIVE ME MY PRICE."

VALUE has been said to be the central conception of Political Economy. This practically means that Political Economy regards commodities primarily, not as things produced, or as things distributed, but as things exchanged. Justice is the virtue of exchange, and exchange is between persons. Value, however, seems to be a matter of things, or of abstractions. Behind the things, then, and the abstract terms, we have to find, between the persons who deal with the one and are implicitly denoted by the other, what are the just relations which involve and realize a true conception of value.

Value, the central economic conception, is determined by cost of production, effectual demand, and final utility. What is the moral content of these ideas?

For this purpose we will take three technical terms of the economic theory of value, and examine what are the human and moral facts that underlie them. Value, in the technical sense, belongs to anything, the

demand for which has caused its production by labour. The cost of production fixes the price, but the cost of production varies with the amount demanded and accordingly produced. Thus, any demand which is effectual, that is, which leads a man to be willing to pay the price, helps to govern the price which is paid. The price which any one is willing to pay for any given commodity, is the result of a more or less unconscious comparison of the relative worth to himself of the satisfaction of his various needs and desires. The exact comparative utility of a thing, which fixes the price at which a man will buy it, is called its final utility.

In the system of exchange every one is concerned, both in supply and in demand, and is buyer and seller in turn. Every one, therefore, has to be just, both as buyer and as seller. The question is, do you give what you ought, price for commodity, and commodity for price? Price is the cost of production. Supply furnishes the commodity which meets the effectual demand. What ought we to give as cost of production? With what ought we to meet the effectual demand? and what is the moral bearing of the comparison of our various needs and of the idea of final utility?

1. We may adopt the language of Political Economy

so far as to say, that what we ought to give as the price of a commodity is the cost of its production. But we must give our own meaning to the term, and see what *is* the cost of production, the human cost, the moral cost. Cost of production, in the sense of Political Economy, includes, as elements that enter into it, rent,[1] interest, earnings of management, and wages of labour. We may say that the representatives of the first three of these are fairly well able to take care of themselves, and that the conscience of the buyer has principally to concern itself with the price paid for a commodity, in so far as it affects the wages of the labour that has produced it. If the demand for cheap goods presses at all, its pressure will, sooner or later, be most heavily felt by the labourer. In any case, if we keep the wages of labour in view, we shall be considering the typical case of pressure on the producer. Earnings of management are only the wages of another kind of labour. Interest is the fruit of past labour. Rent is in part the interest on an investment, in part the wage of management or direction; and in so far as it is neither of these, it can obviously best afford to submit to pressure. We shall therefore keep the variations in wages which

1. Cost of production.

[1] According to strict economic theory rent should not be included, but cf. Toynbee, "Industr. Rev.," pp. 137, 138.

follow on variations in price as the main point to be considered.

The broad statement of our duty in the matter is simple enough. It is to see that the price we pay for things affords fair wages to those whose labour produces them. The question what is a fair wage, we need not here consider. If we come to discuss the matter with those who receive the wages, there are differences of opinion, but they are differences which could be solved in mutual agreement.

The practical difficulty of doing our duty is, however, quite different from this. It lies in the fact that we do *not* come face to face with those for whose labour we, nevertheless, help to fix the wages or the price. Our immediate duty is to give the price to which the immediate seller is entitled. The immediate seller generally sees that we do this. But the immediate seller is not equally careful of the interests of those who stand behind him. We do not know what falls to them, and especially we do not know what wages the actual workers have received. I wish to press this point. In a moral consideration of prices it is, at present, the main point—*we do not know.* We do know that working men and women, on the average, get more nearly what they ought to than they did fifty years ago. This is a very good thing

to know, as far as it goes; but it does not go far. When you are dealing with millions of human beings, an average may satisfy the intelligence, but it will not satisfy the conscience. And, though we know that the average workman receives more than he used to receive, we have no assurance that he receives what he ought to receive, what we and he, if we came face to face, should consider to be his due. We do not know the average workman or the life he lives. When we go into a shop to buy cheap goods, we don't think about him. And yet we buy him, and buy him cheap still, in spite of encouraging statistics. In a general way we do know that there are many industries where men and women are overworked and underpaid. But we do not know which they are. It is a plain point of private duty not to buy of any dealer, whose supply we know to rest on a system of labour underpaid and oppressed. But the few cases in which we know this are nothing to the mass. We do know, thank God, of dealers and manufacturers, whose business is managed on principles which make it a privilege to deal with them. But these, again, are nothing to the mass. We do not know the mass. Is there no duty to know? If any force of public opinion demanded that we should know, the knowledge would be ours.

If the spirit of inquiry into the matter were once roused, light would be let in on the dark places, where men do wrong which they scarcely acknowledge to themselves, and make the mass of the buying public partakers in injustice, if not against their will, at least without their knowledge.

Are there any real reasons, which are not bad reasons, why the essential facts should not be known? Why should it not be matter of common knowledge and notoriety, at the price of what rate of wages we purchase the cheapness of our goods, except that there is no common desire to know facts, with whose moral significance the common conscience does not care to concern itself? And yet, if we may know and do not know, we are partakers in any injustice that is done, and that not against our will, but with it. No doubt, with any amount of knowledge on the subject made available, injustice and wrong would have their lurking places still; but, at least, we should not, in the execution of an obvious social duty, be faced with the impossibility, from blank and absolute ignorance, of doing anything else but neglecting it. Our neglect would not rise up against us now and then, with crying facts of misery and degradation. Will it not rise up one day against every one of us, with a cry which shall be in itself a condemnation? We ought to give the

cost of production; we ought to be able to see the lives which produce what we buy at the nicely calculated price of, say, 2*s.* 11¾*d.*; we ought to see the cost—the cost of life, the cost of pain, the cost of crime. It is one part of the matter to get nearer to the lives of those who work. Then we can see what low wages mean; we can quicken pity and sympathy into indignation, and nerve them into the resolution that will bear fruit, through work and self-denial, in our own lives and surroundings. It is another part of the matter that it should belong to the credentials of a trade that the wages it pays should be known, and the conditions under which its labour is carried on should be open to inspection and verification.

We are no longer to be scared by the fear that any rise of wages will be followed by an increase of population which will absorb it. We know that education, and the advance of wages themselves, the gain of self-respect, and the subjection to the better influences of morality and religion, cause a rise in what Political Economists have rather curiously called the standard of comfort, and that better wages mean a better life. "The standard of comfort" is a phrase that stands for a varying rate of improvement in the ideal of the working class, as to the life with which they will be content. It might mean, without any forcing of the

words, the ideal of a tolerable life, which those who buy should be content to provide for those who work. The force of all that I say here depends on the belief, that if those who buy saw the price in pain and degradation of their cheap enjoyment and convenience, they would submit to inconvenience, sacrifice what had ceased to be a joy, and live lives of less material comfort, rather than purchase ease or pleasure at the price of wrong, and that man, face to face with man, if only *one* desires that each shall have his due, will agree on what is due when all is done.

2. Effectual demand.

2. It may seem as if we turned to the duties of another economic class, when we ask what ought to be supplied to meet demand. In fact, as we have said, we are all, in one way or another, sellers as well as buyers. Even those who live on the interest of money invested have some responsibility for the choice of the industry from whose profits they draw their income. Either they are justly paid for something, or they are unjustly paid for nothing. No doubt there is a great difference, both in the manner and in the degree in which this duty presses on different classes of the community. But no member of any class can afford to be secure that his share of the duty is slight and inappreciable, until he has considered in what the duty consists

of those who supply the demand for any commodity.

Political Economy deals only with effectual demand. The distinction between effectual and ineffectual demand suggests three different spheres of obligation.

You are responsible, in so far as you contribute to the supply of any commodity, for seeing that the buyer gets what he asks for and can see that he secures. Even here, where interest and duty coincide, the operation of the economic force is not always certain, and there is room for moral motives to come into play, to supplement the working of the economic machinery. Supply aims at meeting the main mass of the demand, such as it is. But demand is not an indiscriminate mass, it is not all equally intelligent, or equally blind; and dealers often succeed in lowering themselves to the level of a stupid and undiscerning machine, by declining to take into account any individual variations from the average and uninstructed demand. This tendency is not only stupid and mechanical, it is wrong. It demoralizes, because it dehumanizes industry and trade; it deprives it of its character as an intercourse between the members of a community of moral and spiritual beings; it degrades all those who play any part in a system which declines to rise to the human level. It is our

duty, in supplying demand, to be keen to discern what it is best to demand and to supply; to be open to see distinctions between intelligent need and blind and habitual fashion, to learn from the one, and to educate the other.

But demand, which is supposed to be effectual, often asks for what it cannot see that it secures. Here there is a wide range for the working of conscience. The division of labour has been so rapid, and has become so multitudinous, that scarcely any individual, however well-informed, can understand the processes, or judge the results of the industries of whose products he makes use. A man may know very well what he wants, and yet not know how to see that he gets it. If we leave out of account all tricks of the trade, all devices for seeming to give what we do not give, and deceiving the eye of the ordinary man—devices of whose dishonesty there can be no question—there remains, in the supply of a demand which is supposed to be effectual, a wide difference between conscientious and unconscientious trade. Suppose a dealer to have got past the point, at which he can bribe his conscience with the necessity of doing what others do, as though thieving and murder went by fashion; he may still, avoiding obvious dishonesty, fall far short of the standard

which we expect to be attained by the man whom we call a good and trustworthy tradesman. We call a man trustworthy who knows what we want of him as well as we do, but who, knowing how to give it, and whether he gives it or not, a great deal better than we do, does give it, and acts as what he is, trustee for his customers. Industrial organization has become too complex for it to be possible for a customer to know for himself, in every instance, that he is getting what he wants, what he says he wants, what he is known to want. Either the man who supplies it must see that he gets it, or—what is the alternative? The alternative is, that we fall, more or less insensibly, into the condition, in which we cheat each other, with no better excuse than that we know we cheat each other, and acquiesce in it. We "not only do such things, but take pleasure in them that do them." The currency of morals is debased. No one is supposed to do really and thoroughly what he says he does, to make, to the best of his ability, what he professes to make. It is taken for granted that we take each other in to a moderate and decent degree. Excellence, and the very idea of an aim at perfection, tend to disappear and die away. Our standard is not what is just—not what I who sell, or you who buy, think to be just, but what I

who sell can decently pretend to be just; while you who buy laugh in your sleeve, and contentedly pay a price, which you know to be lower than that which would purchase sound and good ware, because, though it exceeds the value of the poor and second-rate production you receive, it does not exceed it by more than, in the present state of morals, you must reasonably expect. Effectual demand is an imaginary thing. There is a wide borderland between demand that is really effectual to secure what it demands, and demand that is ineffectual altogether.

And what of this—the ineffectual demand? If we could picture it, if we could envisage it in any presentation of facts, and they need not be imagined, what a satire it would be on the working of the perfect economic machine! There rises, indeed, from either side in the great exchange, from buyer and seller alike, an ineffectual cry for help that is not given, for hope that is not to be fulfilled. If it could be fulfilled! If most men would strive, as some men do, to give their fellow-men their price, life for life, to take the life that is given them, such as it is, and, grateful for its joy and its blessing, to render back their best—the best service that they can give by their own work and trade—to the lives of others, what quickening would there be of the lives and

energies of all, as they felt exchange to become a living transaction, a spiritual privilege! We want we know not what. As in prayer to God we stretch out the hands of a blind and speechless supplication for gifts and blessings beyond the wishes we can frame in words, so the unspoken prayer goes out to our fellow-men; only there is no hearing ear, no wisdom to construe, no heart to satisfy our need. There is an ineffectual demand, vocal enough to be effectual, if we would listen and would answer, for truth and soundness and solidity, for vigour and grace and beauty, for useful and trustworthy help in work and in its product. To make this demand effectual, the motive of self-interest will never avail. There is an appeal, as of one blind and dumb, from those who know not to those who know, to which charity and justice alone can give the answer—justice which acts without regard of consequence, and charity that loves to give without reward.

But here we pass into another region. The view which we have taken of the human cost of production, of the delusion of effectual, and the pathos of ineffectual demand, leads to a different way of looking at what we see to be the exchange of life for life.

3. Your demand, say the Political Economists, the demand which you succeed in making effectual,

which helps to determine the cost of production, by affecting the amount which, at any given cost, will be demanded, is itself the result of a kind of unconscious competition in your own life between different objects of desire. The price you will give measures the exact comparative utility, the final utility of the thing you buy to you. There they stand over against you, the human souls and bodies that toil and suffer to produce for you. To which will you beckon? Whose product will you choose? Which will you count worthy of the sacrifice of the rest? Which is the thing that has final utility for you? Final utility! The words have an ominous ring. As you weigh your pleasures and conveniences one against another, you are dealing with the produce of human life and toil and pain. Weigh it well, and think whether, in this conflict between various desires, there be no room for a desire to see those who serve you, for this pleasure or for that, themselves in the enjoyment of some pleasure in their life.

3. Final utility.

In the final choice, even now, is not this worth weighing and taking into account—I do not say whether your ease is purchased at the cost of some perfection in the work by which you pay for what you get, but whether your variety of comforts is not

bought by paying for each at such a price as gives no comfort to those who furnish them? May you not be demanding, at the one end, a payment for your work in wages and in ease, such as to enable you, at the other end, to keep up a lively competition between the trades which minister to your ease, and in whose products you take out your payment? You are measuring, in fact, not merely as it seems to you, the comparative worth to yourself of this or that gratification or advantage, but the comparative and final utility of yourself, and your own life, and your complete enjoyment, as against the selves and lives of those on whose labour you live. The mass of the demands and desires which you are matching one against another, to see which you can afford to gratify, make up the price which you demand for yourself. The subdivision in the mass, in the allotment of reward for the supply of one element after another of your comfort and enjoyment, marks your answer to the demand which meets you from soul after soul that labours and suffers for you—"Give me my price." And one after another may add, as he goes down to death, "A goodly price, that I was prized at of them."

XIII.

THE CONSUMPTION OF WEALTH.

The distinction between productive and unproductive labour is better stated as a distinction concerning consumption.

Political Economists draw a distinction between productive and unproductive labour which, as stated with some unnecessary paradox, has given rise to a good deal of fruitless controversy. The true upshot of the contention of the Economists may perhaps be stated in the form of the proposition that luxury is not good for trade. In any case, for the purpose of economic morals the distinction can be best expressed as a distinction between productive and unproductive consumption.

Consumption is the beginning and the end of economic life.

Consumption is at once the end and the beginning of a cycle of economic events. Consumption is the end of production, exchange, and distribution: everything is produced in order that it may be consumed, is exchanged in order that it may be consumed, is distributed in

order that it may be consumed. The whole process ends in the consumer. And the consumer, on the other hand, is the beginning of the process. He is able to produce because he has consumed. His production is the use which is served by his consumption, its issue and effect. We have to consider what ought to be the effects of the consumption of wealth.

We have observed that competition between our own desires, between the different products which feed and minister to a well-provided life, tends to force down the standard of comfort of the various industries which have each to produce at the lowest possible price, in order to enable their own product to stand its chance. This consideration belongs to the morals of exchange. The main duty, however, of the consumer, as consumer, is to rate the respective values of the different ways of consuming wealth, not with a view to the conditions precedent to their supply, but with a view to the consequences of the different forms of consumption themselves.

What is the moral rank, with respect to their results, of different kinds of consumption?

There are three obvious forms of motive to consumption. We may consume wealth on ourselves, we may consume it in further production, or we may consume it in help or pleasure to others. We

have to estimate the moral value of each of these three.

We must first consider their relation to one another. What a man consumes for the satisfaction of his own desires may still be so consumed as to forward production and to help others. In any life a certain minimum of provision for self is needed to maintain the man in efficiency as a productive machine, or as an organ of help. Again, things consumed in assisting further production are so consumed, in great part, for the personal gain of the man who devotes them to this purpose. His motive may be to enrich the provision for his own life, or for that of his family; or the personal motive may take another shape, namely, the gratification and pleasure felt in the energy of production itself. And the use of wealth in production generally serves a helpful purpose, and may be dictated by a helpful spirit. Lastly, wealth devoted to the express purpose of the help of others will help production, in so far as it helps producers, and will minister a high kind of personal pleasure to him who must still be considered as primarily and by initiative the consumer.

These considerations will suggest the special lines of duty in each kind of consumption. We shall take the different kinds in the inverse order to that in which we have mentioned them.

1. It is plain that the duty of help is the dominant motive of the three. The moral purpose of the whole economic system is mutual help, and the moral end of the life of the individual man is to live for the good of others. But, apart from the influence of the law of help on the production he assists, and on his individual expenditure, every man is plainly bound to devote a certain amount of wealth to the direct purposes of help. This is, perhaps, an easy thing to do, but it is not an easy thing to do well. Help to the helpless is simple and straightforward enough—to those who are helpless from the weakness of infancy or age, or from disease, or from misfortune. But, until we arrive at the impossible ideal of a perfectly working economic life, there will always be numberless cases calling for help by need, and yet in which the wrong kind or degree of help will only foster helplessness as a disease. Often men come, for a time at least, to a helpless condition from a shifting of the centre, or the market, of an industry, or from some cause in which they are not to blame; often from intemperance, or idleness, or vice in themselves, or in some member of their family; often from a complication of moral and economic causes, since the effect of the latter is soonest felt by those

1. Consumption of wealth in help.

who have some moral or physical disqualification. And it is in this great variety of cases, certain to be always arising, certain to exist—if we don't see them, they exist unseen—in which it is difficult really to help. The immediate need may, and must be relieved. But Political Economists have rightly suggested the caution, though the caution has often, unfortunately, stood as a substantive principle and acted as an excuse for indifference, that to let people live on help is to teach them to be helpless. The difficulty is one to be met in detail. It cannot be sponged out by any general statement; it is only shirked by reckless abstention from almsgiving, or by a reckless resort to it. But two principles suggest themselves as guides, where the obligation is once seen or felt to help in some way.

This obligation must stand first. It is perfectly certain that there are individual cases of want, resulting from inevitable causes or from vice, in the reach of every one of us. The range of every single individual includes cases enough to employ to the full his help-giving power. The help which he does not give is not given. There is a gap left in the moral provision for the needs of man. No one can fill your place. He has enough to do to fill his own.

But when the main obligation is recognized, to find

out who there is within our reach whom we can help —and modern means of communication give charity a very long arm—to pass by no opportunity for help where help can be given, there remain two considerations by which to be guided. First, the truth which underlies the caution of the economists. The man whom you help has got to be himself a help-giving and a producing animal. Unless you help him to this, your help is not worth much. If you merely give a selfish satisfaction to your own feeling of compassion, you give an anodyne to conscience, but you do not obey its behests. You have helped the *man* as little as you could, to help him at all, and you may have given him, with your help, evil which will more than outweigh it in value. The mere giving of money to those who ask for it is help of this kind. It has helped to create a class of professional impostors, who practise as a trade the appeal to sensibilities which are too delicate to enable us to pass by pain, but not too delicate to enable us to feed and foster the vice which multiplies pain a thousandfold. You have got to give help of such a kind, and in such a way as will put the man you help in the way of himself becoming helpful, a useful and productive member of society. There are associations formed all over the country for carrying on the work of this

discriminating charity, which helps by giving work, or by sending men where they may get work. These associations are often blamed for the mechanical and imperfect way in which they do their work. Let us first see that their work is the work that needs to be done, and then our second guiding principle will show how we ourselves can help to remedy its defects.

The obvious defect of a society or an organization in the work of charity is that it wants personality. Is not this partly because it wants persons? An overworked and insufficiently manned organization is sure to become mechanical in its action. The organization is nowhere adequate in size or *personnel* to the work it has to do in any district. Reinforcements of workers are wanted to make the machine more complete, and to convert it into a living organism instinct with the spirit of a full and vigorous life, of an individual sympathy which need not be less tender or less real, because it operates with the conscious power of a corporate existence. Personal help is needed in another way. Personal help must be always at work, to feed and supplement the action of these societies and organizations, local or general. Your help, even if you help through a society, should be your own. Your own sympathy, as well as your own self-denial, should find vent in it. You yourself

should enjoy in it the personal privilege and the personal pleasure of help. Your support of any institution for help should be stimulated by some personal contact with those who need, and your personal work should not be missed, in the absence of your contribution to the corporate work of knowledge which you alone can give, and of the living sympathy which helps to inform the organization with its true and spiritual life.

Help, then, should be help, not to the passing need only which excites your pity, but to the man who needs—needs to be made himself a productive and a helpful man. And it should be personal, giving to you the personal pleasure of charity, the employment of your own spiritual faculty of mercy and kindness, the use of the opportunities which you, and you alone, *can* use.

2. The teaching of the Political Economists has favoured the consumption of wealth in assisting further production. This tendency of the science has been, in part, a natural outcome of the philosophy with which it was commonly associated, a philosophy which was apt to lose sight of the reality of things and persons, in the analysis of the relations by which they were constituted, to let history not merely contribute to, but supplant defini-

2. Consumption of wealth in production.

tion, and which was accordingly content to view the economic system of human life as a system of means without any end. If we attempt to follow this tendency in our view of economic life, we feel as if we were gradually getting lost amidst the whirling wheels of some vast and complicated piece of machinery, started we know not why, working we know not for what end, subordinating the spiritual energy and interest of life to a blind and all-absorbing mechanical routine. Wealth is to be devoted to production, and the wealth so produced to production again, and so on for ever and for ever, in an endless, weary round. If this is all, we feel inclined to ask, why produce at all? Who is the gainer by the whole proceeding? That there is a truth whose perception prompts this rebellion, is implied in the view of economic life and of consumption which we have taken. Production is an end in itself, not as production, but as an essential feature in a system of mutual help. The spirit of mutual help, or of love, is the end in itself of human life, economic or otherwise. In so far, therefore, as these two can be considered as separate from one another, production and help, production is subordinate to help. And it is quite possible to lose sight of this subordination, to pursue production as though it were an end in itself, and not

to consider whether its purpose may not be best answered by what does not seem to forward its progress. There are uses of wealth, both for the help of need and for the satisfaction of personal desires, which, while they seem to rob production of resources, do really and finally aid, more than any direct production, the production of that which is best worth producing, the mutual help which all production is intended to forward and secure.

But it remains true, nevertheless, that production, as an end, plays its part in all the uses of wealth, and that a directly productive purpose should assign its destination to some considerable proportion of any resources that a man has at his command. The safeguards, against an abuse of the recognition of this productive purpose, are the acknowledgment that beyond production there is always the final purpose of help, and that, accordingly, the aim of maintaining production must not be allowed to defeat in detail that which is its general end; and, beyond this, the perception that the production which any man forwards, is a part of the life in which he has to live out his own soul and realize his own desires. No man must allow himself to be degraded into a mere productive machine; no man must be driven into actions which his better nature disavows, or drawn away from

the fulfilment of desires which his better nature prompts, by the supposed necessity of increasing or maintaining a certain rate of production. The whole nature, the self whose desires are the motive power of life, sets to the processes of production a limit and a standard. They must rise to the standard and observe the limit which are involved in this moral necessity, that the productive machinery, which is moved or aided by the will, should take its place as part of the life of an eternal being with eternal ends. The individual will and mind, the individual presence and sympathy should make itself felt, so far as may be, throughout the range of the industry it feeds, and the character and extent of the industry should be such as to make this a possibility.

3. Consumption of wealth in the satisfaction of personal desires.

3. Lastly, we have to consider that kind of consumption of wealth to which the term consumption properly belongs—the use of it to satisfy the personal desires of a man. Production has its end in consumption to meet individual needs. Help is help to individual lives. In being consumed, wealth loses itself in the personality whose life it feeds, to emerge again in productive and helpful activities. Here is the end, the existence of lives which labour in production for helpful ends—the

laborious life lived in love and help for other men. In the support of this, wealth finds its true destination. And it is here that the distinction comes in between productive and unproductive, helpful and unhelpful consumption. The test by which every man has to try his own consumption of wealth is the question, whether it makes him a more useful, a more helpful person. There are many ways of consuming wealth that we should be sorry to see banished from the world, which this principle seems to condemn. It is scarcely necessary to set aside the idea that brain labourers are less productive consumers than hand labourers, or that lawyers or schoolmasters or clergymen do not reproduce, if they do their work rightly, in visible and tangible results, the worth of what they consume. Perhaps the arts which minister to the beauty and the grace of life are in more danger from a superficial misapplication of the principle. We must take life in its highest and fullest meaning, as that which consumption has to feed. Life includes enjoyment and leisure, as well as work. Work, with no intervals but those of torpor, is not life. Joy is a part of the very meaning of life. And yet it will remain a severe test by which to try our expenditure upon our personal pleasures, to set against the services they enable us

to render with a brighter mind and a more vigorous will, the good which might otherwise have been done by a different use of the same resources. There is such a thing as waste of wealth, and worse than waste. If that which has cost labour is wantonly destroyed, it is wasted. If it is absorbed in the joyless pleasures of those who are weary of pleasure, if it is spent on enjoyments that do not quicken or gladden soul and body for their work, that contract the heart and deaden the sympathies, it is wasted. Even here it is more than wasted, but where it is spent on sensual indulgence, on senseless dissipation, and on vice, it produces indeed, for it ministers to death and generates corruption—corruption which is the slow process of a living death in the will whose powers fail, in the mind whose judgment darkens, in the heart, whose light is quenched by the mere selfishness of sin—death in all the ghastly horror that overruns what was destined to be beautiful and strong, in those who are the victims of luxury and sin. Luxury as well as sin has its victims—lives, souls, and bodies devoured by the mere selfish appetite, which gluts itself with pleasures which it cannot enjoy, and degrades to this vile use those who, in being thus abused, are robbed of any human dignity, shut out from any spiritual fellowship with those

whose lives they ought to serve, whose moral death they do but disguise with semblances of joy, and stamp with the condemnation of men who have made men the ministers of sin.

Wealth should be consumed, and be consumed in joy. Life, laborious and self-denying life, should be graced with beauty and filled with many pleasures. The highest is the pleasure of helpful life itself, the pleasure of love. This can live even where the others are denied. It can live a keener life for their denial, as good can triumph over evil. But even in so living, it will instinctively clothe itself with the lesser pleasures which beset the path of purity and crowd upon the heart of love. It will not scorn the beauty of the home in which God has set it to work, the marriage feast, or the lilies of the field, or the flowers in the garden of the risen life.

XIV.

COMPETITION AND CO-OPERATION.

"Called to be saints."—1 Cor. i. 2.

The economic aspect of the saintly character.

People often treat the religious or Christian view of life, or of any practical question, as though it were, not from the fault of the religious person, but necessarily and in itself a partial and one-sided view. There is the medical, and the legal, and the scientific, and the political, and the economic point of view; and there is also the religious point of view. Each of them is partial and abstract, that is to say, from each you look at a part of life, or at one aspect *only* of the whole. The religious point of view may be the most important, but it is only one; and to decide a practical question from the religious point of view only, is like deciding whether Scotland is a good country to live in from observation of a single county, or from a study of one department of its life—its agriculture, for instance, or its local government.

The ideal of saintliness brings before us a different view of the relation of religion to the various departments of life, namely, that it is supreme—supreme, not by excluding them all and claiming the whole field for itself, but by including them within the range of its own commanding principles. As Philosophy among the sciences is the mistress and servant of all, the source of their principles, the recipient of their conclusions, weaving them all into the tissue of the world's thought, in which, generation after generation, the feeling and experience of men takes substantial spiritual shape, so is Religion among the departments of practice and of life. The religious motive is the only supreme motive, co-ordinating all the rest, explaining their force and their variety, solving their contradictions, fusing them into a harmonious whole of perfect life.

And this has a bearing on the relation of Christianity to one class of questions, especially on what may be called, in the widest sense of the term, social questions—questions, *i.e.*, which concern man's life as a member of society. It is not merely that the Christian religion took shape in a society—a Church, and that the principles laid down in the Bible about that spiritual society apply, with necessary modifications, to any society; it is not merely that the ideal

Catholic Church is a model society, in which we may learn the principles of social life for societies which have not the same directly spiritual purpose. There is more than this. The individual Christian and Churchman is the subject of social duties, and if Christ be in him of a truth, religion will pervade and govern all his social life, and determine what his social duties are, and in what way they are to be done. So that if—as I am assuming, and as S. Paul states generally when he speaks of the Corinthians or Romans as called to be saints—saintliness is a thing of *our* daily lives, and these daily lives include social duties, there is, so to speak, a social aspect of saintliness for us to study. And if among these social duties there are, to take a narrower range, what we call economic duties, then there is an economic side to the saintly character. Christ comes to live and energize in the soul of every Christian, and to show, to manifest Himself in their fulfilment of the duties of their lives. I am speaking to those who have their share in the life of a great commercial city. In this life, in our economic life, how is the saintly character to be shown? Do not think this is a paradoxical question. A man who is a merchant, or a manufacturer, or a tradesman, or a mill hand, has got to be a saint as a merchant, or a manufacturer, or a trades-

man, or a mill hand, or else not at all. You are not going to exclude all these from the call to be saints. You must ask, then, what effect does the call to be saints have on the principles or practice of economic life—a life in which we are all concerned, and either do or neglect our duty, whatever our profession may be.

Do we in this region do our duty? Even if we do, it will not be amiss to review some of the principles on which we do it. A Christian's duty is to "walk worthy of his vocation," and our vocation is to be saints, and the most obvious social feature of the saintly character is love. The saintly life is the life that is governed by love—informed by love, through the power of Christ Who dwells in us. Our economic life exhibits two features, is governed by two principles, one of which is on the face of it in harmony, and the other on the face of it in conflict with the Spirit of Love—co-operation and competition.

1. Economic life is a system of co-operation.

The system of our present economic life is a very wonderful work of God—the system by which we men of every country and of every class supply one another's needs, and administer the resources of the earth. More than a hundred years ago the study of it by a great Scotchman filled his mind—and, as his ideas made way, the minds of all

men—with wonder at the vast constructive power of the motives which seem to be at work in it. Since Adam Smith's time commercial life has grown more wonderful almost every day. But is there anything in it more wonderful than this, that whatever may be the motives which have brought it into being, and which actuate every member of the system, it is, as it stands, a vast system of co-operation, a world-wide association for mutual help of man by man, and that every detail in it is, to every member of it, a channel, an occasion, an opportunity of love. I am not saying—far from it—that it is, as a matter of fact, entirely pervaded by a spirit of good will; but I do say that, throughout, its machinery is fitted for the exercise of good will, because it is, as it stands, a system of mutual help.

It is sufficiently obvious that, in so far as we all contribute to a common stock of produce, we are "fellow-helpers one of another," each giving aid to the rest in the struggle with the needs of life. When men work together they can always do more than when they work alone. Fellowship has a multiplying power. And what is familiar to us under the name of division of labour, as an agent in swelling incalculably the produce of human labour, is, in fact, the principle of combination for the common end of increasing the produce of labour, under one particular

aspect of its working—under the aspect, namely, of organization—building together vast multitudes of individuals into an economic body, in which each member has its own office for the promotion of the life of the whole. What is in this system the condition of the life of each individual? He lives by feeding the lives of others, by considering their needs, by consulting their interests. He is dove-tailed into his place in a spiritual fellowship. And he has before him, at least as a possibility, to view himself as one who lives for others, and works for others, and devotes his thoughts, his energies, his life, every day to the service of his fellows. It is not difficult for us to see, though it may be difficult to feel, that, as members of a vast society for joint production, we are devoted, consecrated to the principle of mutual help.

Is it more difficult to see this if we look at our place in the economic system as a system of exchange? What is the principle, the motive of exchange? It is that each party is the gainer by the process. Exchange is the actual communication from man to man of the fruit and result of that multiplied production which comes of combination. According to the working of this principle, each party in an exchange is giving a benefit to the other. And if justice is the law of exchange which assigns to each party his due, the

question what is due is decided by a reference to a common standard and a mutual understanding, which makes men conscious of a more intimate and more spiritual fellowship than a common striving against need, a common ministry to happiness and well-being, a fellowship, namely, in right, a fellowship in conscience, a fellowship with God in the knowledge of what is just and good.

And if we look at our economic system as a system of distribution of the produce of labour among those who have had a share in producing it, by the foresight and self-denial of past labour, by present labour of the brain or of the hand, the conception of wages, of payment for service done, carries us into a region certainly not more alien to the spirit of love. Of late here,[1] more than elsewhere, you have had to deal with those kind of difficulties which bring out the fact that, in the problem of distribution, man is dealing directly with the vital needs of his fellow-man. Tenderness and forbearance, charity and self-sacrifice, come into play in these relations most of all, because they are personal. And our present commercial troubles carry at least one blessing with them, if they do away, in some degree, with the evils incident to the large scale system of industry which has come into vogue during

[1] In Dundee.

the last hundred years, by restoring a keener sense of personal relation, a warmer kindness, a heartier fellowship between those who have to divide the produce of the labour, on which each has expended some portion of that which goes to make up his life. Love is at home wherever person has to do with person, living soul with living soul, and that on which soul and body live.

I have tried to draw out and to put forth how the spirit of love and good will finds a natural sphere for its activity in our present economic relations, under the different aspects in which we commonly regard them. I do not think you will be inclined to say that I have gone beyond my record.

And yet you and I alike have surely been haunted all along by the shadow of another thing that would shape itself, in spite of us, out of the very materials of which we were making our picture of love. Let us look this ghost of facts in the face.

What we have been haunted by all along is a kind of counter-statement of fact. At every turn we have been inclined to interpose with the fact of competition. Competition: the materials for the picture are so ample as to make it difficult—it is fortunately needless—to draw it. We know that our economic life is full of competition, we,

2. And yet, at the same time, a system of competition.

and sometimes our consciences, are painfully conscious of the fact. And yet this it is necessary to observe—that competition is an essential part of our economic life in every aspect of it which we have considered. Competition is a productive power; it promotes and stimulates every improvement in the productive machinery. The rate of production would not have advanced, the quality of things produced would not have risen in anything like the same degree without it. Competition is of the very life of exchange; it is the very means by which that comparative utility of products is gauged which gives each its value to the buyer; it is the means by which the exact cost of production is ascertained which is the limit of price to the seller; it is competition, again, which actually does decide the rate of interest and the wages of brain and hand labourers, which is the force at work in distribution. There is far more than this that forms part of the familiar picture. Strife, and reckless self-interest, and the struggle for bare life between man and man—these, too, follow like a shadow on the common meaning of the word. There is false competition and true, good competition and bad, no doubt. But I suppose our first and broad impression is, that competition is an essential part of the economic system, and that it will not bear much light; that if

we set it, as a feature in life, face to face with the saintly character, it would have reason to hide its face and be ashamed.

Well, then, here stand these two broad, surface, economic facts, features of our whole economic system, features of the life in and by which we live—it is a system of co-operation, it is a system of competition. What does Christianity say to them? Does it say, "Of course, you must compete, but don't forget to co-operate"? Does it say, "Don't carry competition too far," or, "Let co-operation modify co-operation"? I don't think it says any of these things. If competition is, as I believe it is, a real and useful, that is, a helpful part of our economic life, Christianity has not got to blink it, or to put it in a corner. What I think Christian principle does say, is this: Co-operation, fellow-help, is the dominant, competition the subordinate principle. Mutual help for life is the end and guiding principle of conduct in economic as well as in all other matters. If, and in so far as competition takes its place in a system of mutual help, it is good. Wherever it runs counter to the law of help, it is bad. This is the general—it may seem a very general—principle; but it is worth something.

3. The ideal of saintliness says, at least, Subordinate competition to co-operation.

These are things which have to do with the lives

of every one of us every day. It is not for me to say how far, or in what proportion, or in what relation these two motives, the instinct to co-operate, and the instinct to compete, are mingled in your lives. That is for you to say. All that I have laid down is this: If all this region of your life has been governed by the working of Christ in you, for the love and help of men, thank God for His grace, and for the consecration of your life, to-day, with a full heart. If competition, or what comes of it, has been either a region of your life left outside the influence of religion, or if the word represents difficulties of conscience, scruples, a sort of inarticulate remorse, I believe that a guiding thread is to be found in even so general a principle as this, that competition is always a means, never an end, always a means to more vigorous, more effectual, mutual help of man by man, and never justifies a single violation of the law of love.

This will mean, at least, that we must never shrug our shoulders at the results of competition, or treat them as though the working of this sacred principle must not be interfered with. It is a means to an end. If it is failing to attain the end, let us see why our machine does not work, and try to make it work better.

Again, does not this view of competition draw a fairly clear distinction between the very ideas of true and false competition? Does not the true link itself rather with the meaning of emulation, of rivalry in good works, or, if you like, in good work, and the false with strife and unregarded pain; and cannot we ourselves—at least, in our own sphere—draw the line between the two? If so, we must do it.

And, lastly, if you yourselves are at any time in any degree sufferers by the working of this principle of competition, does not this view of competition elevate and dignify your loss? You were paid for what you did well at a fair price; now others do it better, or at a lower cost, and your suffering loss is an incident of this gain to those you serve. It is your part, then, to show the patience and humility of those who are "called to be saints," to look how you may do better work, or other work, which shall deserve its reward. And if the days of prosperity have made it hard to come down, hard to begin afresh, the lesson of patience and humility is not less needed. It is not less true in this region than others, that "those whom God loveth He chasteneth." Let it be said of you as it was said of the saints of old, "Though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised,

they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath He tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble."

XV

THE PRACTICABILITY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF RIGHT.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."—S. Matt. xxiv. 35.

If we look at life as it is pictured in the New Testament, and then at life as it is, the view must leave upon our minds the impression of an almost appalling contrast.

Contrast of Christian principles and Christian practice.

On the one side is a system for the ordering of life, a law, a code, a body of cogent and imperious principles; and on the other, a tangled and broken web, disordered, and disdaining order, governed, or governing itself on lines that run counter to almost every detail of that diviner plan.

On the one side we have such ideas as these, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," "Bear ye one another's burdens," "Submit yourselves one to another," "I came into the world not to do My own

will," and the example of Him "Who went about doing good," and died upon the Cross; and on the other, the spirit of competition, the ideal of independence, and the worship of comfort and success.

The contrast may easily be heightened; neither picture can be easily overdrawn. If you look first at the ideal, then at the reality, it would almost seem as though some mighty fiend had been at work, trying how best he could produce a parody, a caricature, a ghastly lampoon on Christianity.

Look closer at the belief and life of those who profess the Faith, and we have the same contrast in a smaller compass. Take the principles laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, and see how many of them are shelved and set aside. They are classed in our minds as unpractical, because impracticable. We do not trouble ourselves to give them a meaning; they are so far away from the life we live. "Give to him that asketh thee," "Love your enemies," "Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth," "No man can serve two masters," "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat," "Judge not," "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Who can say that his life is, in theory even, governed by these? At most, they have some practical influence on what we are pleased to call the spirit of our lives—as though His spirit

were not meant to take bodily and substantial shape, Who was Himself "the Word made flesh." The teaching, the theory, the system, the principles of Christianity, we leave to sound in our ears in the parentheses of life; to listen to them is the luxury of our leisure, to make their music familiar, that it may soothe our souls in death. But life, practical life, the business and work of it, and the governing, dominant, inexorable, authoritative principles of Christ —Christianity and life—they are incompatible, they must exist side by side, and modify each other, and rub along as they may; there can be no close union between them, no submission of either to the other. We do not say all this; but does the justification of our practice come to less? Do not we who are religious show, like the world at large, a glaring contrast between life as it is and the morality of Christ? Do we not in effect turn upon God, and say, "You made a mistake; you sent Christianity into the wrong world. In some other world, in some far distant star, these laws of love will hold and rule, and their eyes will 'see the King in His beauty.' But here, in the stress and throng of struggling life, love can only flourish like some exotic, nursed through life in the warm and sheltered places of the world"?

And yet in practice, the organization of life, as it is, necessitates service, and offers the alternative of willing or reluctant service.

But is it true? If the thing formed dared say to Him that formed it, "Why hast Thou made me thus?" and man lift up his voice against his Maker, could we make this our plea? Look closer at the life that is about you, and see.

Science has had opened before it wonderful and endless vistas in the realm of system and law, correlation of force with force, interdependence of one law with a thousand more, all world-wide in their scope and unswerving in their operation. As little as we can dream of a limit of space, or an end to the possible perception of parts and movement within the walls of the minutest atom, so little can we imagine any limit to the endless analysis of law within law, to the complexity of the play of interdependent forces which penetrate the matter of the world. And yet the wonder of *this* world of law is as nothing if we set it side by side with that other world in which we—we who analyze, and perceive, and wonder, and adore—in which we more truly and more nearly live. It is to this world that we must look, the world of motives which sway the will and move the heart, which animate and develop the society in which we live, if we would judge how far life admits the free operation of Christian principles.

And these motives are as infinitely complex as the society is which results from and embodies them. What, for instance, are the forces which set any one man in his place in society, and which keep him there? How varied, how incalculable a mixture of love and hate, of desire, and interest, and prejudice, and fear, and hope, is brought to bear upon his life as on a single point! How wide is the range of the motives which have put him where he is! The home affections which nurtured and coloured his childhood and youth, the influences of fellowship and friendship, the chance associations of place and time, the self-interest of others which has advanced him or kept him back, their generosity, their fancies, their weaknesses, even their vices—all these are so many attractive and repellent forces, which fix him in his place in the moral universe, and set him his work, and give him his fortune for life. They have formed his character and determined his opportunities. The life and personality of any single man are example enough of the complexity of the motive forces which play through that life of society which we share. In this maze of conflicting motives, how are Christian principles to be brought to bear?

Well, take him as he stands, the individual man, in the midst of this world, and, through all the con-

fusing variety of impulses which affect his position, we can discern these two simple truths. He is there to do some work for society, and his position is, as it were, the payment which society gives him for his work. He has work to do, and, in one form or another, wages to receive. It follows from this, that he has two alternative motives for his work—the good of others, and his own gain. And though the difference in the moral value of a life animated by the one or the other be infinite, these two motives will, as regards a great portion of his life, dictate the same course of action. Generalize this statement, and the conclusion is, that society as it is, is held together by the joint or alternative action of two motives—on the one hand a desire to do good work for others, on the other hand by self-interest. Small doubt the two produce different results in many ways; still less doubt that where they produce the same result, it is externally, not morally the same. But, externally, it is very largely the same result that these two opposite forces of selfish and unselfish desire are working out.

It may be said that, taking the life of society as a whole, selfish motives have by far the larger share in its organization, or it may be denied. Whether it is so or not, as society stands, a man's selfish-

ness, if he is fortunate enough to have any work at all, cannot easily make his life altogether useless. He must give in order to receive. The usefulness of the work done increases with the unselfishness of the motive that prompts it. For instance, the love of work itself, apart from its results, produces, as a matter of fact, better results than the love of gain, and so on through the various gradations of motive up to the highest. But even at the lowest point, the collective selfishness, if it be nothing more, secures that though a man may only desire his own good, he cannot get it without doing some good to others. Thus, not only is there a general level secured of good done, from whatever motive; but the result is this, that almost every man, by the very necessities of his life, finds himself in a position in which he has immediate occasion for the exercise of unselfishness. It is a small matter that he has the occasion, no doubt; he must have the will to make a change in himself; but, at least, he cannot plead that the life in which he finds himself involved is at war with the principles on which he is called to act; that the world in which he lives is no field for their operation. No doubt the incoming of a higher spirit will make great and visible changes in his outward practice;

It offers, at least, the occasion of unselfish life.

but there is a practical body of work which he has always been required to do, which offers itself at once as the congenial and appropriate organism for the new spirit to enter and to animate. There are channels, ready made, through which the new blood may flow; there is the skeleton and frame-work which may be clothed with the loveliness of life. All is ready for the new spirit; as of old, it may be said, "A body hast Thou prepared for me."

I have supposed the case of a life of work in the world, but governed by wholly selfish motives, to exemplify, merely in an extreme case, the truth that life affords a ready and open field for the exercise of those higher principles which, at first sight, seem alien from its general practice. Most of us have lived and done our work, partly, at least, under more unselfish impulses. Again, I have taken, as an instance of a principle seemingly unworkable in the life of the world, the one great leading Christian principle of unselfishness. But what is true of one, may be shown to be true of all. And my appeal is this: Do not fear to let the highest principles of the teaching of Christ rule in the common world of daily life. It is a field in which they will be at home.

I do not say it will be easy to work them out

into practice; it will not. But it is our plain duty to do it; it is a duty which we very largely neglect. And we neglect it, to a great extent, because in our hearts we believe it to be hopeless. If it is hopeless, no doubt it becomes more and more so every year; and every fresh step in the complex organization of society, every enlargement of the boundaries of a city or an empire, every advance in trade, in invention, in division of labour, makes the idea of living a Christian life in the world more chimerical and absurd—if it is hopeless; but it is not. It is not hopeless, because, by no mere fortunate accident, but by the very law by which society lives, its increasing organization only multiplies opportunities for the best and noblest life. As this organization advances, it becomes not less, but more and more evidently true that no man lives by himself, or for himself, but takes his place in a vast and intricate system of mutual help, in which he has his own marked and peculiar office, not to win what he can for himself, or to take what comes to him, and then to make the best use of it he may, but to do that which is given him to do, as a work for man and for God. And if this view of life will fit itself, as it assuredly will, to our present society, then here is the field where Christian principles ought to be

shown forth. Christ came Himself to live among men; His teaching affects profoundly all our relations to our fellow-men; it is in the life we live among our fellow-men that we should be Christians, if anywhere.

The occasion implies the obligation,

But if it is plainly true that Christian principles find their true field in modern life, with its complex organization, its world-wide web of thronging, anxious life, then here, not less than elsewhere, the very highest Christian principles must be authoritative and absolute. They cannot be occasionally, or vaguely, or thoughtlessly followed. Our adoption of them must be fearless, absolute, universal. They must be *governing* principles, regardless of all consequences but those which affect themselves and their own working. We must follow them distinctly, and with understanding of what they mean, and what they involve, with that deliberate, careful discernment which comes of a study of the principles of Christ, and a desire to make them real hard facts to ourselves and to others. Nothing less is the life of a Christian, nothing less than the real desire, at all costs, to understand and know the Mind of Christ *for us*, to follow the law and live the life of Christ, here and now, where He has set our life, and given us our work to do. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

This is the issue. "Show me thy faith by thy works." Are you made a new creature? Where is the new growth? Are you a member of the Body of Christ? Every movement of the limbs is governed by the head. Have you received of His grace and of His Spirit? They are the gift to you, in life and reality, of His righteousness.

The gift *to you*—to every one alone. Yes; Christianity is, above all things, a social religion —it treats us as members of the larger society of the world, it is embodied in the society of the Church—but it always speaks to individuals. Alone your life began, alone you knew the dawning in your heart of a Divine Presence, and the light of holiness; alone is your converse with God, your incommunicable knowledge of His Law. Sole and indivisible is your responsibility. Alone you die; alone you shall be judged; nay, alone you are judged now. You stand alone. Your position no other can fill. Others may do the like, but not the same; your duty is your own. Your circumstances, the details of your life and work—all these are peculiar to you; they are for you to do with them what you will. You may turn them either way; they are your own —the field which God has given to you, in which to work out His Law, with careful thought, to see that

which is personal and absolute.

no stone be left unturned, no action left ungoverned, unconsidered, uncontrolled, free from the sway of that Eternal Law. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall not pass away.

XVI.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

It is a practical question to ask, in conclusion, at what general end we aim in any changes of practice which would be produced if economic conduct were considered, as we contend it should be, as a matter of Christian morals. In general terms, it may be answered that we aim at the free attainment of the economic ideal.

Freedom the keynote of the economic ideal.

Freedom was the keynote of the gospel of Political Economy as preached by Adam Smith. This freedom was the freedom of production, industry, and trade from the artificial restraints of law, from those restraints, especially, which were dictated by the false idea that money, the means of the exchange of wealth, was wealth itself, and which, under this idea, enriched a certain number of traders at the expense of the general prosperity of the community. What was demanded was, that law should leave the economic machine to work by itself: the result was

anticipated that there would be a great increase in the amount of wealth produced, and in the prosperity of the community at large.

A positive freedom, the freedom to enjoy.

We have to set forth a new demand, that the economic motive should be set free from any restraints which are imposed upon it in the working of the economic machinery, free to attain the result at which it really aims, happiness in the enjoyment of wealth. Wealth is its end—not the production of wealth only, but its just use, and its right enjoyment—wealth, as it contributes to the well-being of those who produce it. This freedom differs from the other in two respects. It is not merely negative—the removal of restraints; it is freedom to do something—to enjoy. Again, it is human; it is freedom, not for a system only, but for men. This freedom of enjoyment it is the aim of economic morals to secure. A man's duty in regard to wealth may be said to be so to act as to forward its highest enjoyment. Wealth reaches its end in being enjoyed. What is the moral condition of its enjoyment? What are the forces which should be at work in its production and its use, with activity unhampered by false motives, undiverted by moral fallacy, unhindered by sin and wrong? What is economic freedom?

The enjoyment of wealth means, first, the freedom of energy, a system of life in which all objects of desire fulfil their function in evoking energy, and in giving the pleasure which attends its exercise, in which the energies of all are called forth to their fullest extent. The existence, then, of an idle class at the top or at the bottom of the scale, is against the law of our ideal. There is no apparent enjoyment in idleness, except in the freedom to carry out every chance caprice, to exercise the energy which may be active at the moment, or at least to enjoy the condition in which there is an energy of enjoyment even in repose. But idleness deadens energy. The want of an habitual purpose allows the power of concentration to die. There is no occasion or motive for self-denial. A difficulty becomes a bar, even to the execution of a whim. In the ideal economic life there will be no energies unemployed, and the man who uses the opportunities of a leisured life, not to select his work with care and to pursue it with deliberation, but to avoid the exertion of a definite purpose and the pains of a deliberate pursuit, will be seen, not only to throw away his own life, but to commit a crime against the society whose resources it is his pleasure to waste. He is a mere moneyed vagrant; he will not work,

(1) the freedom of energy;

neither should he eat. The ideal economic life would offer to the energies of all opportunity for exercise, such as they could resist only by a very deliberate rejection of what would be obviously seen to be a right and desirable life.

The life which the existing economic system too often does offer to the energies of youth, is a life of deadening routine. In early years the routine is enforced, in later years it becomes voluntary, for the sake of what experience teaches that the machine may be expected to produce. But the work, the employment of the energies, remains in many cases routine work still, unintelligent, unfeeling. Education in these cases has a great deal to answer for; education which has failed in its main object of setting before the boy the life which the man must lead, as a life dignified by its purpose and by the spirit in which it should be undertaken; education which has failed to make those, who do work that must be dull, sharers in other interests and other pursuits, since it has not developed in them the tastes and capacities which these interests and pursuits employ; which has left them capable of being converted into useful machines, incapable of ennobling or finding pleasure in the sacrifice which their life calls upon them to make.

Our present economic life affords instances enough of another kind of employment of energy, busy, restless, unceasing, absorbed, in those who care for their business and care for nothing else. They represent the existing economic system at its best, but they are very far indeed from being instances of the true enjoyment of energy. The energy which is incapable of rest is incapable of enjoyment. The man has become a slave to his work. Every man must give himself up to his particular pursuit; he must devote to it the best of his time and of his strength; but it should leave him with time and force enough to enter into and enjoy some other processes or results of human activity. His time should not be so absorbed that his life is an alternative of work and sleep, nor his powers so possessed by one pursuit, that he cannot share in any other part of the general life to which he contributes. Restless energy is the energy of a partially developed nature, in which all faculties but one are dwarfed, and the exercise of that is unenjoyed, because there is no *man* left to enjoy it. In the ideal economic life, then, every man would have such conditions as to enable him to find recreation, after the exercise of one set of faculties, in the development of others, and would so not only supplement his work with amuse-

ment, but transfuse life and pleasure into the work itself.

(2) freedom of sympathy;

The enjoyment of wealth means, secondly, freedom of fellowship and sympathy. Fellowship is a condition of happiness in the enjoyment of wealth. Happiness we have already construed in a sense, which excludes from the meaning of the word the mere lazy enjoyment of resources. Happiness, in the sense in which we speak of it, is an energetic life, and it is a life of intensely social energy. There should be fellowship between fellow-workers in the same industry, there should be fellowship between different industries, and industrial fellowship between different nations. There should be fellowship between the different social grades in the industrial system, between masters and men, employers and employed, the brain and the hand of labour. There should be nothing approaching to caste distinctions, no hard and fast divisions. The first condition of this practical union of sympathy is fellowship in industry.

The obligation to work at any sacrifice of ease and comfort required by the efficiency of the work, should be equally and visibly felt from the bottom to the top of the industrial scale. The mere sense that the labour of production is shared will go a long

way to break down the barriers, which our modern system of large-scale industry has built up, between those who, under the domestic system, used to work side by side, though none the less they were master and man.

But, beyond this, the ideal economic system would give a fellowship in conditions between the different members of the economic body. In the actual economic system the conditions are very different for different grades of work, and for the work of master and of man. It would be visionary to expect to create a system in which this inequality of conditions should not exist. But it is no dispraise of a moral ideal to call it visionary. The relative risk in success or failure in a higher and lower grade of work may be equalized, where the sense of fellowship in those in the higher grade is strong enough. The just and proportionate share of produce which cannot be exacted may be given. The scope for individual energy, enterprise, and skill, which is the prerogative of the master, may be voluntarily shared with those whom he employs. Much may be done towards realizing the ideal of fellowship, not only in labour, but in the stake in its success, in the sphere it offers for intelligence and adventure, in the aim, which should be set to all alike, of thorough work, the

outcome of a life wholesome in its surroundings and secure in its basis, producing sound and useful results for the benefit of the community at large. It would be an enormous stimulus to the full employment of the energies of all the workers in an industry, that all should be made to feel themselves fellow-workers in a common concern, in which all have, in proportion to their powers, common risks and a common sphere of life, and with whose success each can identify the realization of his own best personal ambition.

Lastly, we should move towards the ideal of a fellowship in enjoyments. Here, again, education has the greatest part to play, and education has yet to realize the mission of developing the powers of enjoyment. But a great deal is done, when we see that we ought not to acquiesce, as a matter of course, in a wholly different moral standard of enjoyment in different classes of society, and that the obligation of diffusing a taste for higher and more refined enjoyment rests on those who possess it. No one would underrate the value of the sympathy, which stretches out a hand across the gulf that separates employers and employed, to give help in times of sickness or trouble. This sympathy does make a real bond of fellowship. But this fellowship discloses the want of a more constant sympathy, a more per-

vading similarity of tastes, for literature, for art, for every kind of physical and mental exercise, for wholesome and graceful ways of life. The best prized wages of success are not the ones to be enjoyed in selfish contentment with social superiority.

But, thirdly, we must say that the ideal economic system will, above all things, have this for its characteristic, that wealth, the commodities produced, are really enjoyed to the full. And the enjoyment of wealth means the real, living use of commodities. The power of things, produced by human industry and art, to delight the human mind and heart needs to be freed from whatever bonds now imprison in material things their spiritual efficacy upon the souls of men. It is the men who must be freed, in whom the powers of enjoyment must be liberated from the oppression of ignorance and habit. (3) freedom of enjoyment.

The living use of commodities is, first, an understanding use of them. We should know the world to which they belong, their material and spiritual context; we should know and see in them the labour it has cost to produce them, the labour which lives embodied in them; we should know the uses to which they may be rightly put. We are all familiar with the savages who were delighted with the acquisition of the European trousers, and wore them round

their necks; but we are unconscious how often a similar farce is enacted before our eyes, perhaps even by ourselves, with things made for use and pleasure, perverted to misuse in which there is neither sense nor enjoyment.

And there should be feeling, as well as understanding, in the use even of the meanest kind of wealth. The pleasure of the maker in his work—if his power of taking pleasure in the making has not been seared and killed—will express itself in some touch of grace or beauty in the product. The vulgar mind is dead to this and disregards it, and vulgarity is an economic sin. In the moral ideal of economic life is included the training of a taste which shall take pleasure in an ordered life, where things are in their true places and are put to their true uses, and where the pleasure in order and fitness finds expression in beauty and in grace.

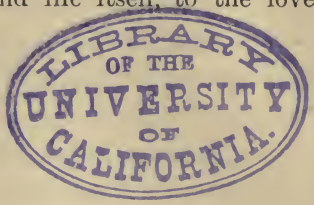
And, further, the living use of things is real and purposeful, not wanton, wasteful, or misguided. There is a deliberate abuse of wealth to be excluded, besides the misuse of ignorance. The abuse of wealth to purposes of vice, of intemperance, or luxury, or sloth, is an economic sin—apart from its essentially vicious character, whatever that may be. It is the burial of human efforts, which have afforded the

produce, in shame and evil; it is the destruction of possibilities of good which are latent in what we abuse; it is the waste of human power and human joy.

We have spoken here of the economic ideal of the enjoyment of wealth from the point of view of the consumer. At every turn we have been reminded, how the absence of understanding and feeling and purpose in those who use it has bred the incapacity to put mind, or heart, or will into his work in the worker. But we are drawing the ideal in the spirit of whose aim we must set about our economic duty, and we must not be checked by the distance to which our own fault has removed the ideal at which we aim.

Would the realization of such an ideal tend to give material wealth and its enjoyment too strong a hold on the affections of men? Sloth and selfishness and an irrational and unfeeling use of wealth surely makes men worse slaves of material things! A spiritual enjoyment makes men conscious that the spirit is more than the matter which embodies it. Certainly it is the greatest need in the economic ideal, to hold by the indifference of all material things, in comparison with the spirit of life and love, which we have seen may be realized in their production and

their use. The last feature in the moral ideal of economic life is the power to sacrifice the lower wealth always to the higher, material wealth to moral and spiritual well-being, all comfort, and ease, and labour, and life itself, to the love of men and of God.



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